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THE

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A GERMAN STORY,

FOUNDED ON INCIDENTS IN REAL LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

A round unvarniſh'd tale. OTHELLO.

VOL. III.

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MIDNIGHT BELL.

A GERMAN STORY.

FOUNDED ON INCIDENTS IN REAL LIFE.

BY FRANCIS LATHOM.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

THE MIDNIGHT BELL.

CHAP. XVIII.

My ſoul's delight, my utmoſt joy, my huſband!
I feel once more his panting boſom beat;
Once more I hold him in my eager arms,
Behold his face, and loſe my ſoul in rapture.

Eſſex. Tranſporting bliſs! my richeſt, deareſt treaſure!
My mourning turtle, my long abſent peace,
Oh come yet nearer, nearer to my heart!
My raptured ſoul ſprings forward to receive thee:
Thou heav'n on earth, thou balm of all my woe.

THE EARL OF ESSEX.

A FERVENT kiſs, imprinted on her cold lips, recalled Lauretta into exiſtence, and ſhe opened her eyes in the wildeſt apprehenſion:

but oh! what a glow of mingled extaly and delight warmed her frozen blood, when ſhe perceived that it was Alphonſus, her beloved Alphonſus, who had beſtowed the kiſs that had awakened her from her trance.

In an unbounded tranſport of joy ſhe embraced him as he ſtood by her ſide; then ſpringing from the bed on which ſhe had been laid, ſhe flew to meet the embrace of her father, and then again ſunk on the neck of her Alphonſus.

When their mutual effuſions of joy gave room for an explanation on the part of count Byroff, Lauretta learnt from the lips of her father, whom it had been her firſt care to teach Alphonſus to know as ſuch, that ſhe was ſtill in the ſhepherd's cottage, that Kroonzer had been put to flight by the

united efforts of her father and the peaſant, and that the chevalier had been killed by a blow from the hand of her huſband, with the oaken ſtaff which he had firſt obtained from the young peaſant when he overcame him, and which Alphonſus had wreſted from him.

Alphonſus then briefly informed Lauretta of the manner in which he had early that morning left Smaldart caſtle, and by the moſt fortunate chance had arrived to her reſcue at the moment ſhe was on the point of falling a prey to the villany of Theodore.

Lauretta ſhuddered at the idea of the danger ſhe had ſo unexpectedly eſcaped, and again claſped to her breaſt the author of her preſervation: he returned her embrace with

all the fervor of that warm affection he bore her, and then turning to count Byroff, he ſaid, " Adviſe me, I beſeech you, what courſe to follow, whither to bend my ſteps."

" What oppoſes your now returning to your humble dwelling immediately ?" aſked the count.

" To meet the baron Smaldart ?" rejoined Alphonſus.

" The law is on your ſide :" reſumed count Byroff.

" I ſhould feel leſs reluctance to behold him if it were againſt me ;" replied Alphonſus. " I cannot bear to meet the man I have ſo deeply wounded, when I know him void of the means of redreſs. — He has ever con-

ſidered Theodore with the partiality of a father, and conſequently muſt have viewed the enormity of his crimes with a ſoftening eye; can he then do otherwiſe than deteſt the man who has deprived him of the darling of his heart? — I am convinced I have not acted wrongly: thus I cannot ſubmit to ſue for his forgiveneſs; and the compaſſion I feel for the grief I ſhall have excited in the breaſt of one who has behaved towards me with the kindneſs I have experienced from the baron Smaldart, commands me not to return to a ſpot where my preſence might ſeem a triumph over the ſorrow I had occaſioned: no! I will ſeek ſome diſtant aſylum, where, living forgotten, I ſhall not renew his miſery."

"From a ſelfiſh motive," ſaid count Byroff, "I warmly ſubſcribe to your idea of

leaving this part of the empire; for, having been ſeen by Kroonzer, it is abſolutely neceſſary for the preſervation of my life, that I ſhould fly immediately from hence; thus, ſhould you reſolve to return to your late dwelling, I muſt forego the ſociety of my child: ſhould you remove to ſome diſtant ſpot, I may ſtill be your companion."

The happineſs of his Lauretta was at all times the firſt conſideration of Alphonſus; and as he now read ſpeakingly in her blue eyes, her diſlike to her ſeparation from her father, he inſtantly declared that he was reſolved on not returning to the vicinity of Smaldart caſtle, and prepared to travel in any direction the count ſhould dictate as moſt likely to enſure his ſafety.

Mutual ſatisfaction beamed in the eyes of

the count and Lauretta, at this declaration of Alphonſus; and the count preſſed that they might ſet out immediately.

In a few minutes the horſes were prepared by the peaſant, whom count Byroff having liberally rewarded for his exertions, and, at the inſtigation of Alphonſus, commanded him to ſend a meſſenger to Smaldart caſtle, with a full and exact account of the tranſactions of the morning, they departed, bending their courſe, in compliance with the directions of the count, towards the north.

Having ſtopped during the day no longer than was abſolutely neceſſary for the refreſhment of themſelves and their horſes, they arrived towards night at a little inn, where count Byroff ſaid he truſted himſelf to be in ſafety.

Immediately on their being left alone in an apartment of the inn, Lauretta asked of her father the conclusion of his history; eager to learn the mystery of the situation in which she had at first seen him, and the cause of the danger he had so strongly expressed of being overtaken during the course of their day's journey.

"My child," answered count Byroff, "I confess that your curiosity has been strongly excited, but weightier considerations must supersede its gratification; we must look forward to the necessities of the future, ere we allow ourselves leisure to indulge in the remembrance of the past." Then addressing himself to Alphonsus, "Have you formed any plan of future life?" he asked.

Alphonsus answered, not.

After a pauſe, count Byroff continued, "You have appeared thoughtful during our journey: I conjectured you might have been deliberating on ſome meaſures which you were undecided whether or not to adopt."

"You conjectured rightly," replied Alphonſus, "in thinking my mind thus employed."

"What were your thoughts?"

"I fear you will not approve them; however, be aſſured I will do nothing without the concurrence of yourſelf and my Lauretta."

Count Byroff beſought him to proceed.

"My Lauretta," he continued, "has doubtleſs related to you the ambiguous and ſorrowful event which marks my early life?"

"She has."

"I cannot die happy, unleſs I ſolve the myſtery by which I am driven a wanderer upon the world; its recollection clouds every moment of my exiſtence, and renders me, in the ſummer of life, a gloomy and thoughtful companion to her, who, knowing the cauſe of my melancholy, bears, with an angel-like patience, the ſour effects it will at times, in ſpite of my endeavours to coerce them, produce in me. Were it not better at once to end theſe agoniſing doubts, to viſit the neighbourhood of Cohenburg caſtle, and, by diſcovering if poſſible the truth, learn at once my future doom?"

"It is a point," returned count Byroff, "whereon I cannot pretend to advife you, your fole guide muft be the impulfe of your own heart."

"But," faid Lauretta, "whence is the intelligence you wifh to procure to be gained? — The country round Cohenburg is doubtlefs unacquainted with the truth, or the young miner, the fon of one of your father's vaffals, muft have known it: — your uncle, he informed you, was gone, no one knew whither, and your mother dead!"

"He faid the fame of me," returned Alphonfus; "thus his information in this point fways me not. — But he pronounced the caftle to be deferted; this was a matter in which he could not be deceived: thus if I vifit it fecretly, I can offend no one by fo doing;

and I will guard againſt wounding my conſcience by the relation of any diſcovery I may there make, ſhould its ſecrecy ſeem to be required of me by the injunctions laid on me by my mother: and Oh! I have for ſome time laboured with an undeſcribable prepoſſeſſion that I ſhall gain knowledge of moment, if I do viſit it."

"You are then reſolved?" ſaid count Byroff.

"I have nothing wanting to complete my reſolution, ſince you and my Lauretta do not ſeem to oppoſe it, but the means of accompliſhing my journey."

"I have that in my poſſeſſion," replied the count, "which, with frugality, will yet ſupport us many weeks."

"Then to-morrow, with the dawn, I will once more turn my ſteps towards my native ſoil," ſaid Alphonſus.

The remainder of the evening was ſpent by them in concerting the route they ſhould travel; and having planned it to their mutual ſatisfaction, they at an early hour retired to reſt.

Reflection on what might be the event of a long-wiſhed, and at length projected, undertaking, ſuffered Alphonſus to ſleep but little, and he roſe with the dawn to awake his fellow-traveller: the count inſtantly obeyed his ſummons, and at ſun-riſe they ſet forward on their journey.

As they proceeded, count Byroff lightened the way by again commencing the narra-

tive of his life, in complaiſance to the curioſity of Alphonſus; and being arrived at the period to which he had deduced his ſtory, when in the ſhepherd's cottage he had related it to Lauretta, he thus went on.

"When I had recovered from the influence of the draught I had taken, which had been only a ſleeping potion of a very ſtrong nature, the firſt object on which I opened my eyes, was a black man ſitting by my ſide, in a dry ditch, under the ſhade of a hedge; the time was twilight in the evening, and being too duſk for me accurately to diſcern his features, I perceived not, until he ſpoke, that my companion was the young jailor, with a new countenance: and when I did know him, I was ſome moments at a loſs whether to expreſs my aſtoniſhment firſt, at his change of colour, or my own ex-

traordinary appearance, for I found myself habited in the garments of a French woman of mean rank.

" ' Ah, *monsieur!*' cried he immediately on beholding me open my eyes, ' how glad am I to see you awake again, and out of that vile prison! — Don't you know me, *monsieur?*' continued he, observing that my eyes were fixed on him in doubt.

" ' I think I do now,' I returned, after having been convinced by his voice who he was: ' but I hardly know myself.'

" ' I thought how it would be when you awoke,' replied he; ' I contrived these disguises that we might pass unnoticed as beggars; — but here, *Monsieur*, take a sup of wine, and eat a bit of bread,' said he,

pulling a flask and a crust from his pocket, 'and refresh yourself; for you must be faint with so long fasting.'

"I readily accepted his offer; and while the flask was at my mouth, he exclaimed, '*Dieu merci*, that we are out of that horrid place!'

"'Why, you were not a prisoner?' I said.

"'Oh no, *monsieur*; but I felt so much for the poor creatures that were, that I could not bear to see them suffer any longer.—But, however, we are out now, and I hope for ever:—woe be to us if we get in again!'

"'But how did we get out, my good

fellow?—How did you contrive our escape?' I asked.

"'I'll tell you another time, *monsieur*: we must not talk about it any more now, for fear we should be overheard:—*Jacques Perlet* will tell you all about it another time.—Oh, but, *monsieur*, you must not call me Jacques now, but some other name, such as blacks go by:—what shall it be, *monsieur*?'

"'Shall it be Cæsar?' I replied.

"'Aye, *monsieur*,' said he, 'as well as any.—Now, *monsieur*, please to remember that, for carrying on my plan, you must, if you please, pretend to be my wife; your features are very delicate, and you may easily pass for a woman; and leave the rest to Jac—— Cæsar I mean, *monsieur*.'

"I readily agreed to any plan of ſecurity in my preſent ſituation; and Jacques then told me we muſt now walk forwards to a ſmall *auberge*, which he ſaid he knew ſtood rather ſequeſtered from the road, and where we were to paſs the night.

"In our way, I aſked him how far we were from Paris.

"'Oh, nine or ten *lieues*, *monſieur*,' anſwered he."

"'By what means did we perform the journey?'

"'It is ſo dark, *monſieur*,' ſaid he, 'that I can't ſee whether any body is near us or not; — I durſt not tell you any thing till by and by.'

" I checked my curiosity, conscious how judiciously my guide was acting; and we arrived within sight of the little inn in silence.

" According to the directions of Jacques, I asked in French for a mean supper and bed, while my companion only occasionally spoke in the vitiated manner in which negroes usually pronounce a language which they have no opportunity of learning but by the ear.

" I was rejoiced to perceive that our stratagem passed unsuspected; and when we retired to bed, which we did in the characters of husband and wife, the better to conceal our real ones, Jacques desired me to sit down, saying he must have a little chat with me before we went to bed, for his tongue

was burning to tell me how nicely he had managed our escape.

"I was, as you may suppose, anxious to learn how my salvation from death had been effected during the time of my insensibility; and placing myself on the foot of the bed, I desired him to begin; he seated himself on the ground by my side, and leaning his arm upon the bed, spoke thus:

"'In the first place, *monsieur*, I must tell you a little about who I am, that you may the better understand my reasons for what I have done.— My father, *monsieur*, was a very honest *frottier* in the *fauxbourg St. Antoine*, and at one time earned a very comfortable living; but misfortunes will happen to the best of people, and one mishap or an-

other had obliged him to borrow small sums of money from several of his neighbours, chiefly to defray the expenses of my mother's illness and funeral, all which he would honestly have repaid, I am sure, if he had lived; but he died, poor man, soon after, and left me without a friend in the world, except my uncle Perlet, the old jailor at the Bastile, and a brother we had none of us heard of for many years.

" ' Well, I had been brought up to my father's trade; and if he had not left me heir to his debts as well as to his business, (which God forbid I should blame him for; for how could he have helped it, if even he had known he had been going to die?) I might have gained myself a pretty livelihood: but his creditors threatened to arrest me for the money, and so my uncle Perlet, too avari-

cious to pay it for me, and too proud to see his nephew confined in a jail, though he lived in a prison himself, took me to serve under him in the Bastile.

" 'I did not like going there at all; but what could I do, *monsieur?* I thought it was better than starving; but by the time I had been there a couple of months, which was about the time I first came to bring you your portion of bread and water, I would almost sooner have died than have staid much longer where I was; for the frightful things I saw, and the groans, and moans, and shrieks I heard in that dismal place, would freeze your blood, and make your hair stand on end, *monsieur*, if I was to tell you them all.'

" I sighed in the affirmative to Jacques'

exclamation; and he continued: 'Ah, *monſieur*, you have had your ſhare of their devil's works, I dare ſay?'

" 'It is paſt now, ſo let us drive away its remembrance,' I replied.

" 'I wiſh I could, *monſieur*: but I ſhall dream of it many a night to come, I dare ſay.—My uncle,' continued he, 'had a room where he and I uſed to ſit by ourſelves in an evening: and as my head was continually running upon the poor unhappy wretches I attended in the day-time, I could not forbear queſtioning him about them; and many a time, when I heard the ſtory of a poor helpleſs creature condemned to die by the rack, or poiſon, I could not help thinking of the fate of his perſecutors at a future day, that all of us muſt ſee.

" ' Sometimes I uſed to remonſtrate with my uncle on the cruelty with which he often aſſiſted in uſing the unhappy priſoners; but his anſwer always was, ' Jacques, I am a true lover of my king, and I'll never treat thoſe kindly, depend upon it, that it is his pleaſure to have otherwiſe dealt by.'—' But may not obedience,' I would anſwer, ' be carried ſo far as to make conſcience troubleſome?'

" ' Impoſſible, child,' he once anſwered me, when I had thus ſpoken to him; ' the king is the repreſentative of God on earth, choſen by himſelf; thus we can never be doing wrong, while we implicitly obey his commands.'—' Then,' returned I, ' how careful ought the king to be, for his own ſake, that his conduct is kind, merciful, and forgiving, ſince, as you ſay, the conſciences

of all his subjects, if they have done amiss in compliance with his commands, are cleared from guilt; of course the weight of all their bad actions must lie upon his conscience instead of theirs, and he be punished accordingly hereafter.'

"'You are a foolish boy,' cried he, 'and don't understand these matters.'

"'I made him no answer; for truly, *mayhaw*, I did not wish to know more than I already did of a conduct that seemed to me void of reason and humanity; I had only a mind to ask him whether he prayed to the king instead of *le bon Dieu*; but I durst not, for fear he should think I was laughing at him, and use me as hardly as he had done others for less offences.'

"I could not help ſmiling at Jacques's philoſophy; he laughed too, and thus went on —

" 'Well, *monſieur*, every day I began to long more and more to quit my ſituation: but it was a thing I almoſt deſpaired to be able to do; for I was well aware that my uncle would never give his conſent to my leaving the Baſtile for any other employment, for fear I ſhould tell tales out of priſon; ſo I knew the only method muſt be to run away to a diſtance from Paris; but then I had not much money, and I did not much like to make ſuch an attempt without a companion.'

" 'Some how, *monſieur*, I had taken a liking to you above any of the priſoners I attended; and all I kept wiſhing for, was ſome

means of ſetting you at liberty, that we might run away together; I knew, if I could contrive it, you could not diſlike it, and there was ſomething in your countenance that told me you would be kind to me afterwards.

" 'Oh, *monſieur!* how often have I wiſhed to ſit and talk half an hour or an hour with you, and tell you how much I pitied you, and how I wiſhed to ſerve you; but I durſt not, for all the walls in that Baſtile have eyes and ears, I believe; for nothing can be ſaid or done but what is known by my uncle and the governor.—I often inquired of my uncle ſomething about you, and I learnt, a little at a time, that you were, as moſt of the other priſoners are, a gentleman; and that you were only retained in priſon becauſe they were afraid to let you

out, for fear you ſhould expoſe the ſecrets of their tyranny.

" ' And is it owing to the king that the poor gentleman ſuffers all this for nothing?' ſaid I.

" ' Partly,' my uncle anſwered, ' and partly to thoſe who firſt repreſented him to *his majeſty*, as obnoxious to the ſtate.'

" ' Then the king has ſome good friends, who lighten the burthen of his conſcience by taking a little of it upon their own,' ſaid I.

" ' My uncle anſwered me with a look which determined me never to hazard a joke again, on what he deemed ſo ſacred a ſubject.

" ' About five weeks ago, my uncle told

me, as he had given up the care of half his prisoners to me, I must fill every part of the office myself, and accordingly on the next morning must carry a dose of poison into the apartment of a *marquis*, who was condemned to die: I was afraid of disobeying my uncle; and I knew besides that if I did not do it, somebody else would, so that my refusal would be of no service to the poor wretch; and thus, at the time appointed, I attended the governor to the cell, just as I came with him into yours, *monsieur*, on the morning when he thought he was giving you your last dose: but I was too sly for him, — eh, *monsieur?*

" 'When the poor gentleman had swallowed the draught, and the governor had left the apartment, my uncle locked the door

upon the dying man, saying, 'nobody must go in any more till he was dead.'

"'What! must we leave him all alone at this terrible moment?' asked I.

"'Why, does he want any body to help him to die?' returned my uncle.

"'*Ah, pauvre diable!* I wish it was over with him,' said I.

"'It won't be long, I'll answer for it,' he replied, and then commanded me to leave the door by which I was standing, and could not help trying to listen what was passing within.

"In the evening, when all the prison

doors were double locked for the night, he called me to follow him up ſtairs, and we went together into the poor *marquis's* apartment. Oh dear, *monſieur*, I ſhall never forget it. There lay the poor gentleman dead and cold, and all his features ſo dreadfully diſtorted, and his eyes and mouth wide open, that I ſhould have run out of the room with fright if my uncle had not held me by the collar.

" 'Now,' ſaid my uncle, 'we muſt carry the corpſe into the *cimetière*, and bury it.'

" 'I was forced to obey, and we carried down the body to the ſpot he had named, where ſtood a coffin ready to receive it.

" 'I ſuppoſe you think,' ſaid he, 'I am going to bury this man? No! no! I know

a better trick than that; I'll never bury a corpse whilft I can get well paid for letting it remain above ground.' He then told me, that a furgeon in *La rue de Saint Etienne le mont* always bought the bodies of him to diffect; and that as he had the privilege of paffing the draw-bridge when he pleafed, he had always carried them to him by night; 'but,' faid he, 'I'll contrive for you to carry this one, and I'll bury the coffin in the mean time.'

"'Well, *monfieur*, the body was put into a fack; I pretended it was fo heavy I could not carry it; my uncle knew better, and I was forced to fet off according to his directions: he went with me to the draw-bridge, and having whifpered the guards, they let me pafs.

" ' Do you know, *monſieur*, I'd wager my life, the governor and he went ſhares in ſelling the dead men; for nobody, I had often heard my uncle ſay, could go over the draw bridge without the governor's knowing it, and giving leave.

" ' Notwithſtanding the weight of my burthen, I ran all the way; for not being accuſtomed to be ſo near dead people, I thought every moment I could feel him ſtirring and groaning.

" ' When I had got quit of my load, I began to conſider whether I ſhould go back or not; I felt in my pocket to ſee how much money I was worth in caſe I took the chance of running away, when, *pardi*, *monſieur!* if I had not left my purſe at home. I did not know what to do now; for having nothing

to support myself with, I thought I could not go far without money, so might be heard of by my uncle, taken back to the Bastile, and perhaps roasted alive for what I had done, by the great fire in that room where all the irons are hanging about: I trembled at the very thought of it, and so ran back as fast as my legs could carry me.

"'When I returned back to my uncle, he gave me an *écu de six francs* out of his profits, as a reward for what I had done, saying, he would double it the next job, for he was determined I should not want for encouragement, and I should soon have another, for *monsieur Montville* had not much longer to live.

"'I was not a little surprised and disturbed at hearing this, *monsieur*, as you may

ſuppoſe; and I was ſure that if any thing could be done, it muſt be done directly. Well, I kept thinking, and thinking, and no way could I contrive to get you out; at laſt a plan came into my head, and I reſolved I would try it whether it ſucceeded or not. I complained to my uncle that I had got a very bad tooth-ache, and told him that I had frequently been ſubject to it, and that my father had been uſed to give me ſome laudanum to cure it, and begged that he would too.

"'He gave me a ſmall phial about half full, warning me to be very careful how I uſed it; I immediately ran with it to my own chamber, and having poured it into the phial that had held the poiſon given to the poor dead *marquis*, and which I had waſhed out for that purpoſe, I let fall the empty

phial: it broke with the fall, juſt as I wiſhed; I ran down to my uncle with the broken pieces in my hand, and telling him my misfortune, begged him to give me ſome more.

"'The old fox was taken in for once, *monſieur*, and he brought me about as much as before.

"'I ſuppoſe,' ſaid I, as I took it from him, 'if I was to drink all this ſtuff, it would kill me?'

"'Twice as much would,' he replied: 'that would make you ſleep for about two days.'

"'I found by this that my firſt quantity would have been enough for what I wanted with it, but however I thought it was no

bad thing to have two doſes by me, in caſe any accident happened to one of them; and ſo I put them both carefully by, and by the next night my tooth-ache was gone.

" ' Well, *monſieur*, at laſt the day was fixed for you to die upon: I found means of coming to your window, as you muſt recollect, the night before; and when I told you not to refuſe to drink any thing that was offered you, I ſaid it becauſe I was afraid you might by ſome means ſpill the potion that would be given to you, thinking it to be poiſon, as you could not know I had contrived to give you laudanum in its ſtead, and then might be obliged to take the poiſon indeed, as a ſecond doſe would have been brought you, that I ſhould have had no opportunity of changing

"'When I left the outside of your prison window, I went and got one of my phials half full of laudanum. Now the poison phials are always full; so I knew my false one must be so too, or it would discover the trick. I durst not put in any more laudanum for fear I should kill you, and if I filled it up with water, it would look so much paler than the poison; so at last, what do you think I did, *monsieur?* — why, I filled it up with treacle and water, and it looked quite black, just like what it should have been.

"'When morning came, I was called to attend the governor: my uncle gave me the phial of poison; and I, to deceive him, said in a low voice, 'to-night I shall earn *deux écus*.' He nodded significantly, and I

followed the governor and his guards. At the turn from the laſt flight of ſtairs into the gallery, I ſtopped an inſtant, and ſnatching my phial from my boſom, and ſlipping the other into its place, I made a noiſe with my feet as if ſaving myſelf from falling; and then running a ſtep or two after the governor, and rubbing my knee as if I had bruiſed it, 'better ſo than a broken leg,' I cried: the governor turned round and looked at me; ſtill rubbing my knee, I drew up a face which made him ſmile at my ſuppoſed accident, and he walked on without ſuſpicion.' "

The travellers at this moment arrived within ſight of a ſmall houſe, and Alphonſus interrupted the count's narrative, by propoſing, that, if it proved a houſe of public accommodation, they ſhould make it their abode for the night, as the twilight was al-

ready beginning to fall. To this proposal count Byroff agreed; and the habitation proving to be such as they wished it, they here put an end to their day's journey.

CHAP. XIX.

With [illegible]
And [illegible]
The happy [illegible]
And with their lusty pipes [illegible]
The chearful birds too, on the tops of trees,
Assemble all in chorus, and with their notes
Salute and welcome up the rising sun,
There's no condition here so cursed as mine!

OTWAY.

REFRESHED by the salutary balm of sleep, our travellers awoke to one of the most glorious mornings that ever burst from the heavens; the sun was beginning his progress towards his meridian of splendor, without a single cloud to obscure his expanding rays; the pearly drops of dew were still hanging on the dripping leaves, and fruit-

ding the blades of grafs; every buſh re-ſounding with the grateful notes of its feathered inhabitants, hailing the return of morn; and every flower exhaling ſweets in gratitude to the riſing preſence of their foſtering orb.

Again bleſſed with her Alphonſus, Lauretta's feelings harmoniſed in the univerſal gladneſs of nature: Alphonſus ſtrove to be chearful, but his efforts were ineffectual; Lauretta obſerved his dejectedneſs, and without remarking upon it, endeavoured to divert it. She was ſometimes ſucceſsful: again Alphonſus ſunk into thought; ſhe varied her attentions; he returned a ſmile of gratitude for her endeavours to pleaſe, and ſhe was happy.

Having made a delicious repaſt of new

milk and fruits, they again proceeded on their journey, and after a ſhort converſation on various topics, count Byroſſ thus purſued his narrative —

" ' Well, *monſieur*,' continued Jacques Periet, 'all day long I was wiſhing, I hardly knew why, to come and take a peep at you; however I ſhould not have been allowed if I had aſked it, and at all events I thought it was much more prudent not. At night my uncle called me to go up with him about the ſame time he had done before, and, oh dear, how frightened I was all the way up ſtairs! — for it had juſt come into my head you might not be aſleep yet; and then, when I found you was aſleep, I was as much afraid my uncle's rough handling, or ſome unlucky blow in lifting you, might awake you.

"'However, *Dieu merci*, we got you down stairs, and into the *cimetière* quite full: I trembled a little when my uncle said he thought you was very warm; but I soon recovered again when he added, that he thought nothing of that, for that he had carried away many a one before they were half cold.

"'In a few minutes I got you put into the sack, taking care to lay you with your head towards the mouth, and away I went, leaving my uncle to bury the coffin, and wait my return.

"'Instead of going to the surgeon's, I made the best of my way for *la porte de Saint Jean*; and being got out of the city, I looked for the first hedge I could find, and setting down my load on the side farthest

from the road, I pulled you out of the sack, terrified to death I was for fear I should have smothered you [illegible] enough I was, when I put my hand to your side, and felt your heart move. I directly set about putting you on this gown and petticoat, and hat, and apron, and cloak, that I had taken from the old woman in the Bastile that is kept to make my uncle's and the governor's beds. I did not rob her of them, *mayhew*, for I put a *demi-louis* into her box when I took them out; and the manner I contrived to bring them away with me, was by buttoning them in between my coat and waistcoat, and telling my uncle it was a lump of cloth I had put there to keep the weight of my load from hurting my shoulder.

"'When I had dressed you, I set about disguising myself, and having turned all my

clothes inſide outwards, I dyed my hands and face with ſome ſtuff I had brought in my pocket for that purpoſe; I then threw the clothes I had taken off you, together with the ſack, over the oppoſite hedge, into a deep ditch, and then ſat me down by your ſide, anxiouſly waiting till ſome cart might come paſt that would carry us a little farther from our old abode.

"'About day-break I heard the wheels of ſome carriage coming from the city; I peeped over the hedge, and ſaw a waggon full of luggage, in the front of which ſat one man, on a bench large enough to hold three or four; I called to him, aſking, 'Whither he was going?'—'To Deſmartin,' he anſwered. Then, pretending that I was hardly able to expreſs myſelf in French, I told him that I had a ſick wife almoſt at

the point of death lying behind the hedge, and that I would give him a trifle to carry us some way on our journey, which lay his road: after a short dispute about what I was to pay him, he consented to carry us, and I lifted you into the waggon and placed you upon the seat, carefully holding you, lest you should fall out.

"'We stopped several times during the day; some pitied my poor wife, some laughed at me for a black *fourbe*, and some were charitable enough to give me a *petit sous*, and bid me take care of *la pauvre ame*; and I directly bought the wine and bread in their presence, which I gave you under the hedge, for which they all called me a *bon garçon*, and one old woman doubled her charity.

" ' I had not taken you out of the waggon all day, for fear, if I did, the people ſhould crowd round you out of curioſity, and diſcover the impoſition: evening was coming on, and you did not wake; we were within a *lieue* of Deſmartin, and I did not know what to do; at laſt I remembered this little *cabaret*, which ſtands a few hundred paces from the high road, for I had once in my life travelled as far as Deſmartin; and telling the waggoner I meant to paſs the night there, as inns in towns were too expenſive for me, I deſired, when we came in ſight of it, to get out. He accordingly ſtopped, and having taken you out, and paid him his promiſed fare, we wiſhed one another *bon ſoir*, and on he drove.

" ' Well, *monſieur*, I knew it could not be long before you woke; ſo I determined not

to go to the *cabaret* till you did; ſo I entered the firſt field with you in my arms, and having ſpied the dry ditch where we were when you awoke, I laid you down in it, and ſeating myſelf by you, chuckled not a little to myſelf at the ſucceſs of my plan,—and when you awoke I was juſt thinking how you and I ſhould both laugh if we could ſee ourſelves in a *miroir*.'

"When Jacques had ended his account, having thanked him in the warmeſt terms for the intereſt he had ſo kindly taken in my welfare, and commended the adroitneſs with which he had effected our eſcape, I told him that it behoved us immediately to conclude on ſome plan for leaving the kingdom with all poſſible expedition; for if my being alive was not diſcovered, he would doubtleſs be ſent in ſearch of by his uncle, and that if

one was taken, the other would in courſe ſhare his fate, and then both, beyond a doubt, fall ſacrifices to the butchers in the Baſtile.

"'Why, *monſieur*,' replied he, 'let us ſet forward as faſt as we can to your home, wherever it is.'

"How aſtoniſhed was the poor fellow to hear I had neither home nor means of ſubſiſtence! He had expected to find me a man of rank and fortune either in Italy or Germany, he knew not which, and who would liberally repay him for his ſervices. He, however, bore his diſappointment with the moſt honourable fortitude, and he drew tears into my eyes by exclaiming, after a ſhort pauſe of reflection — 'Well, *monſieur*, if you had been *un homme de bien*, I am ſure you

would have taken care of *pauvre Jacques*; as you are not, Jacques will take care of you as well as he is able: as long as that money lasts, half of it is yours;' and so saying, he pulled from his pocket his whole worldly treasure, and threw it upon the bed.

"After much deliberation, we resolved to travel into Germany in our present disguises, for what purpose neither of us knew, except that we must leave France, and that all places were equally indifferent; for to take possession again of the mansion and estate I had once quitted, I knew to be an impossibility for me at the present moment to attempt, incumbered as it was with debts and mortgages.

"Next morning at a very early hour we set forward on our journey, and to our great

ſatisfaction arrived in about ten days' time in Germany, without having ſuffered more on our journey than what was occaſioned by fatigue, and our own fears. During the whole expedition, Jacques' converſation was confined to two ſubjects — his apprehenſion of being purſued and overtaken, and his wiſh of being acquainted in what part of the empire was his brother, who had left Paris about four years ago with a man whom nobody knew, and with whom he had only ſaid he was going into Germany. 'He was an ill-le fellow,' continued Jacques, 'and, I dare ſay, took to ſome lazy kind of life; and *parde*, ſo was his former one, for he could not have a much eaſier buſineſs than *valet de chambre* to a *marquis*: it ſuited him, for he got fine clothes, and ſtrutted about like a *ſinge pauré*: I might have had his place when he went away, but I preferred homelineſs and

hard work to ſuch frippery; and you ſee how I am rewarded for my honeſty; but hard fare here, better hereafter, ſays *Lévangile*; ſo I am never caſt down, *monſieur*, happen what will.'

"There was ſomething conſolatory to me in the reaſoning of my humble companion, and I determined to put myſelf under the guidance of one ſo chearful amidſt misfortunes, and confident in providence under its painful inflictions, and accordingly told him I was reſolved to be entirely directed by him in what courſe to follow for gaining our future ſubſiſtence.

"After ſome deliberation, Jacques propoſed that we ſhould endeavour to puſh our way to the capital of the empire, where he ſaid he ſhould ſtand a chance of being bet-

ter paid for exercising his trade, as the value of his work would there be better eſtimated, being, as he aſſured me, an excellent workman.

"On the firſt day of our arrival in Germany, Jacques took advantage of a pool of water ſomewhat ſequeſtered from the road, again to change the complexion of his face and hands, but it was ſome days ere he could accompliſh a perfect triumph of the ivory over the ebony; however, having turned his clothes into their proper ſituation, his appearance became decent; and at the next town, having purchaſed for me a wrapping coat and a hat, I changed the outward form of my ſex behind the firſt hedge we came to on our again proceeding on our journey.

"The caſh Jacques now had left, con-

filled, in all, of a *louis d'or* and *dix fous*; accordingly, in order to housewife the money we poſſeſſed, it not appearing to us ſo eaſy a matter to acquire more when it was ſpent, we reſolved to buy a loaf and ſome cheeſe, of which we ate, when hungry, under a tree; and, as the ſeaſon was the middle of ſummer, we determined to ſleep under hedges or in any out-houſes we might meet with, thus to avoid the unneceſſary expenſe of entering inns on the road.

"Neceſſity reconciles meaſures, which, to thoſe who have never been reduced to adopt them, appear inſurmountable; thus we experienced nothing more than accidental inconvenience from purſuing our plan. In the enjoyment of liberty I ever forgot care; and Jacques never failed to declare once every day, that he had rather

fleep in a ditch with mud for a feather-bed, than on down in the Baſtile.

" Journeying on one night by moon-light, the decayed caſtle wherein you, Lau-ret.., was an unfortunate priſoner, attracted our notice: its ruined condition ſeemed to beſpeak it uninhabited; the gate ſtood open; we entered the hall, and without much far-ther obſervation, we determined to make it our abode for the night.

" We lay down together in a corner of the hall, where we had ſcarcely compoſed ourſelves to ſleep, when the ſounding of a ſhrill tucket aroufed our attention. — We liſtened without ſpeaking: — In a couple of minutes a man entered the hall from a di-ſtant part of the building, and proceeding to the gate, called out, 'All's ſafe.' Immedi-

ately we heard the trampling of horſes approaching cloſe to the gate; a number of men, who were talking confuſedly, diſmounted from them and entered the hall; and the firſt ſentence I diſtinctly heard, and which opened to me at once the nature of this ſtrange adventure, was, 'curſe the barrenneſs of the road! one can find nobody to plunder,' uttered by one of the men as he vaulted from his horſe.

"Preſently another man entered the hall from the interior part of the building, carrying a lamp: in an inſtant Jacques ſprung from my ſide, and running to the man, threw his arms around his neck, exclaiming, '*Ah mon frère, je vous retrouve! Ah mon cher frère! mon cher frère!*"

"In his eagerneſs to embrace his bro-

ther, Jacques had knocked the lamp out of his hand, which being extinguished by the fall, the party was left in darkness to exercise their imaginations on what they had heard; and, from what motive I cannot pretend to say, whether from surprise or any supernatural fear, a general silence prevailed till another light was brought into the hall; on the appearance of which, Jacques, regardless of surrounding objects, came running back to me, all the way introducing me to his brother as his '*très bon ami.*'

"The banditti, for such, you will have perceived, were the inhabitants of this decoyed mansion, immediately came round me; I rose and began to apologise for our intrusion into their dwelling, by stating to them the truth of our circumstances, which Jacques summed up by telling them we

were almoſt pennyleſs, having juſt eſcaped from the Baſtile.

" Avowed enemies to tyranny, and plainly perceiving there was no deceit in the relationſhip of the brothers, the banditti invited us to enter that part of the building which they inhabited, and partake of their ſupper before we retired to reſt, when we ſhould be accommodated with a bed.

" I thanked them for their kindneſs in the warmeſt terms, and they conducted us into a hall where a repaſt had been prepared againſt their return. I ate in complaiſance to my entertainers,—and Jacques, becauſe variety, to which he was unaccuſtomed, whetted his appetite.

" After ſupper I was requeſted to relate

my adventures, Jacques having awakened their curiosity by repeatedly referring to our late escape; and though I should have preferred retiring to sleep, I felt myself bound to comply with their request.

"When I had concluded my story, the leader rose, and taking my hand, — 'We are your brothers in affliction,' he said; 'most of us whom you here behold, have been driven from the haunts of men, by the cruelty of man; but there is not one of us whose heart has been steeled by his misfortunes into inhumanity: never has the traveller whom we have plundered borne the marks of our violence, — never have we left the poor man destitute, — the rich and profligate alone have been our prey, — the unfortunate at all times our care; — you are unfortunate, and we are willing to receive

you as a brother; will you then become one of us, and live free from the deſpotiſm of tyrants, and the malice of an envious world, enjoying perfect liberty, ſubject only to laws of our own, and thoſe uſeleſs where honour preſides?'

"'Well ſaid, noble captain!' cried Jacques, ſtarting up: 'honour amongſt thieves is an old proverb of my father's: I'll make one of you with all my heart.'

"During the time I had been reciting my adventures, Jacques had been drinking pretty freely of the palatable wine the table afforded; and having taken ſomewhat too potent a doſe, it was rather the ſpirit of the wine than that of his own courage which ſpoke for him in the laſt ſentence. The captain perceived his ſituation, and com-

manded his brother to conduct him to bed; but he promised faithfully not to drink another drop, or speak another word, if he might but be permitted to sit up as long as his '*cher maître.*'

" During this little altercation between the captain and Jacques, I had a moment of leisure to reflect on the words which had been addressed to me; I thought they appeared rather an apology for a mode of life which the speaker himself knew to be culpable, but was from necessity constrained to follow, than an eulogium which might tempt me to embrace it: I accordingly requested that I might deliberate on his proposal till the morning; a request readily granted me: Jacques and I then retired for the night,—Jacques assuring the captain he had resolved to serve under him.

"A few moments ſerved to change the powers of the deceitful liquor which had produced Jacques's valour; for he was no ſooner in bed than his boaſted proweſs was forgotten in a profound ſleep, and I thus left to my own reflections.

"During the greateſt part of the night I remained awake, undecided what plan to follow. My mind revolted from becoming a determined robber; but I felt a ſtill greater antipathy to again mixing in the enſnaring ſcenes of that world from which I had already experienced ſo much perfidy and ſorrow; and I at length reſolved to accept the aſylum which had been offered me.

"In the morning when Jacques awoke, all the occurrences of the preceding night had entirely fled from his memory; and he

awoke me in a great fright, inquiring whether we had got into the Baſtile again. Juſt as I had ſufficiently rouſed myſelf to begin to rally his recollection, his brother entered to call us to breakfaſt, and his preſence ſaved me the trouble of farther explanation, as, on ſight of him, Jacques immediately recollected where he was.

"On ſeeing the captain, I immediately declared to him my reſolution; and was welcomed by him into my new ſituation, as alſo ſeparately by every voice of the community.

"The captain then turned to Jacques, and reminded him of his promiſe.

"Jacques ſtared vacantly, and inquired, 'what it was?'

" ' To become one of the fraternity over which I have the honour to preſide,' returned the leader.

" ' Did I promiſe that?'

" ' You did.'

" ' Well then, I'll keep my word; and if you will but feed me and clothe me, I'll be *ſavetier* to you all for nothing: and what more can you deſire of me, if you will but conſider that a cobler ought to ſtick to his laſt?"

" His brother joined me in interceding for the grant of his petition; and his native mirth, rather than any other qualification, obtained for him the majority of votes in his favour.

CHAP. XX.

——————— Yes, yes—'tis ſhe!
This little croſs—I know it by ſure marks!
AARON HILL.

"ON the preceding night, the faces of ſuch of the banditti as had been out prowling, had been diſguiſed with ſome colouring, which was always their cuſtom when going on any expedition; and being now cleared from it, Jacques recogniſed, in the perſon of Kroonzer, the man with whom his brother had left France, of which occurrence this was the brief account: Kroonzer was the ſon of a German man and French woman; his reſidence had been chiefly in France, and his trade, from his infancy, none of the moſt

creditable; his parents having been people, who, by aſſuming various diſguiſes and characters in various places, had made theſe their means of impoſing on the credulous, and defrauding the ignorant; thus gaining a fortuitous ſubſiſtence, whilſt they cautiouſly kept within the pale of the law, and yet were in reality little better than common thieves.

"This mode of life had initiated Kroonzer into all the intrigues of Paris; and from his firſt herding with the banditti, to whoſe knowledge he had been led by accident, he had become extremely uſeful to them, by going annually into France, and finding means of diſpoſing to advantage of ſuch rings, watches, and other trinkets of value, as had fallen into their hands, and, before their knowledge of Kroonzer, had proved of little worth to them, as no one amongſt

them had ventured to hazard the experiment of changing them into money.

"It was in one of these expeditions that Kroonzer became acquainted with Jacques's brother; and having found him to be a man whom he believed would be a valuable acquisition to their society, he had enticed him into Germany under false promises, nor made the real truth known to him till he introduced him to his comrades; a measure which he had however been strictly forbidden by the captain ever again to repeat. Guillaume Perlet was, as it fortunately happened for the security of the banditti, an acceptable subject; for, preferring any kind of idleness to work, his new mode of life was pleasing to him the first moment of his being made acquainted with it.

"The captain treated me with great kindneſs and attention, and indeed my health required it, for the ſudden change from eleven years of inactivity, to the great fatigue I had the laſt twenty days been undergoing, had reduced me to a ſtate of exceſſive weakneſs.

"For the firſt year, I was not required to do any thing more in the various buſineſs of our houſehold, of which every one in his turn took a part, than what I choſe for my own amuſement; nor during the whole of the time I lived amongſt the banditti, in all nearly eight years, was any thing more aſked of me than to take my turn in the evening and nightly watches.

"The evening watch was to anſwer the rucket ſounded by the banditti, on their re-

turn from an excurſion, that, in caſe of the officers of juſtice having entered their haunt during their abſence, they might thus be appriſed of it, ere they entered the caſtle, and, by flying, prevent their being taken with their ſpoils upon them, which would prove ſure evidences of their guilt.

"Of the night watch this was the import; that thoſe who did not go out in the queſt of plunder watched for two hours alternately in the hall of the caſtle, that the fraternity might not be ſurpriſed in their ſleep.

"During the firſt ſix years of my reſidence amongſt the banditti, no circumſtance worth relating occurred; and as I was not conſtrained to act the part of a plunderer, conſidering myſelf comparatively free from

guilt, I felt myſelf tolerably happy: at the expiration of that period the captain died.

"A ballot immediately took place for appointing him a ſucceſſor, and the majority of ſuffrages fell upon Kroonzer.

"About three months after his becoming leader of the fraternity, was the time at which he had always been accuſtomed to viſit France; and as no one was deemed ſo fit for the buſineſs of that expedition as himſelf, he again undertook to perform it, notwithſtanding his riſe to his preſent ſituation; and accordingly, having appointed a deputy to guide the helm until his return, he departed as uſual.

"The time of his abſence was marked with an event of ſome moment: this was the

death of Guillaume Perlet; and for ſome weeks it required all my moſt eloquent perſuaſions and remonſtrances to keep Jacques from exceeding the bounds of reaſonable ſorrow on the loſs of his brother; and he declared, that the thought of leaving me alone in my preſent ſituation, was his only inducement to ſtruggle againſt death.

"At the ſtated time Kroonzer returned, and with him came the chevalier D'Aignon.

"Kroonzer had one fault,—it was that inordinate thirſt of money which often leads its poſſeſſor to gratify in a heedleſs moment his ruling paſſion, and to repent at leiſure that he did not ſubdue it. Conſcious that he had acted wrongly, and yet too honourable to attempt a deceit which might endanger the ſecurity of thoſe to whom the ſtrongeſt

ties of fellowship connected him,—when Theodore had retired for the night (for no one has a right to question the captain, and thus we knew not yet on what motive Theodore was brought amongst us), he candidly confessed the inconsiderate measure of which he had been guilty, and asked our advice how to act.

"He informed us, that during his visits to Paris, he had been much in the habit of frequenting gaming-tables, at many of which he had for the last three years frequently seen the chevalier, and had at times, he said, won of him sums of money to no small amount.—'He always paid his money without concern, and was so eager to enter into any measure for squandering it,' continued Kroonzer, 'that I soon found him to be a fit subject to exercise my talents

upon. No very favourable opportunity offered to forward my plans on him, till a few days ago, happening to meet him at a tavern where he was engaged at dice with a young nobleman, and a diſpute ariſing between them, and ſwords being called in to adjuſt their quarrel, the young man fell by the hand of the chevalier: his rage was now loſt in fear for his own ſafety, and he exclaimed madly, that he was loſt, ruined, and a dead man. I was the only one in the room with them; and approaching him, I told him if he would ſign a draft for five hundred louis-d'ors, which I drew from my pocket, I would inſure his ſafety: he immediately acquieſced, and I gloried in my ſucceſs, till the reflection of a few moments told me how wrongly I had been acting, ſince I had no other means of ſecuring him but by bringing him hither; and I could not ſteel my

heart into being the villain to defert him, now he had paid me ſo liberally for his protection; I accordingly effected his eſcape, and I have ſecured my reward: but how ſhall we ſecure our own ſafety?'

"At length it was agreed that Theodore ſhould take an oath, by which he imprecated vengeance on himſelf if ever he betrayed us, or our haunt; and that we each ſeparately, in his preſence, ſhould bind ourſelves by a ſolemn vow, to ſeek his life, if ever he was known, by the ſlighteſt inſinuation, to diſregard the oath by which he was reſtricted.

"He willingly agreed to this propoſal, probably foreſeeing that a refuſal would have cauſed him to have been retained a priſoner amongſt us for life; a plan which

was firſt ſuggeſted by one of the banditti, but which Kroonzer feared to adopt, knowing that if by any means the haunt ſhould be detected by the officers of juſtice, the finding a man of rank impriſoned in it, would be an unſurmountable evidence againſt them on their trial.

"A ſhort time after, on the promiſe of three hundred louis-d'ors from the chevalier, in addition to the ſum Kroonzer had already received, he again ſet out for Paris, in order to gain intelligence of Theodore's antagoniſt; and on his return, brought information that the wound had not proved mortal, and that the young nobleman was in a fair way of recovery.

"Theodore immediately left us, and we heard no more of him till three days before

your being brought to the decayed caſtle. It was one night about this time, that the man who held the night watch gave the alarm, having ſeen, as he ſaid, a man on horſeback riding amongſt the ruins: the banditti, to whom every unknown perſon wore the dread appearance of a ſpy, or officer of juſtice, immediately prepared themſelves for defence; but a few minutes eaſed their doubts, by their hearing the voice of the chevalier in the hall of the caſtle.

" Kroonzer then firſt lamented that he had not interdicted to him their haunt; but ſtill a prey to intereſt, he again conſented to ſerve him, and Theodore departed before day-break.

" On his departure, Kroonzer informed us that Theodore had bought him, by one

thousand louis-d'ors, to secrete in the castle his sister, who, he said, had formed an engagement with a man much her inferior in life, and which he meant to prevent from taking place, by immuring her in a convent, when he had found one suited to his wishes; but should in the mean time leave her with us, judging it expedient immediately to carry her away from her paramour.

"Kroonzer had promised to fetch this supposed sister, whom he had been told to treat with the greatest kindness, and requested me to be his companion in the expedition.

"The story told by Theodore had appeared to me plausible, and his conduct by no means improper: I accordingly consented, and another of the banditti was chosen

to attend us; and at the appointed time, having diſguiſed ourſelves, we ſet out on our journey in an old carriage which had been left in the caſtle before any of the banditti had known it, and in which we carried proviſion to ſupply us on our journey.

"We ſtopped only twice for a ſhort ſpace of time; the firſt inn Kroonzer did not like, being in too public a ſituation: accordingly we proceeded to the cottage where you remained an entire day, and bargained with its owner for our admittance on our return, for he had already been cautioned by Theodore againſt travelling in the day: — as to the ſecond inn, as he propoſed ſtaying at it only a ſhort time on his return, and that in the dead of the night, he paid little attention to its ſituation.

"We proceeded to the ſpot where Kroonzer had agreed to meet the chevalier; a tap at the window was the ſignal to the little girl who attended you to give the alarm of fire, and then open the door to the chevalier under the pretence of running out to call for aſſiſtance; we entered, and when you fainted in our arms, we immediately carried you to the vehicle by which our companion was waiting for us at a ſhort diſtance from your cottage; he entered it with you, and Kroonzer and myſelf mounted the horſes and drove on.

"Your dreſs, and the cottage in which we found you, ſo ill ſuited to the character of the chevalier's ſiſter, firſt raiſed ſuſpicions in us of the truth of what Theodore had told us; but he laughed at our ſcruples, and explained them away, though I muſt confeſs

not very ſatisfactorily either to Kroonzer or myſelf.

"At the little inn where we firſt ſtopped, a plauſible ſtory, told by Kroonzer, lulled the curioſity awakened in the hoſt and his gueſts by our appearance; and at the retired cottage of old Bartha we did not think it neceſſary to render any account of our actions."

Lauretta could not here forbear interrupting her father to inquire, why Kroonzer, ſince he had no deſign upon her life, had drawn his ſword, on her ſupplicating the pity of him who had been her companion in the carriage?

Count Byroff informed her, that it had been drawn by him as a tacit threat to his

companion, to prevent his informing her of her deſtination, which had been particularly forbidden by the chevalier, and which he had not yet had an opportunity of imparting to his comrade.

"After we left this inn," continued the count, "we became your companions; and our comrade, the driver, having faſtened our third horſe to the back of the vehicle, and being arrived at Bartha's cottage, we ſent our companion forward upon it to the caſtle to prepare for your reception, which had been forgotten by Kroonzer in the hurry of his ſetting out.

"The vehicle ſo long diſuſed had been ſo ſhattered by the journey, the greateſt part of which lay, as you muſt have remarked, over uneven ground, that we thought it un-

safe to proceed further in it; and accordingly, whilst you were in the cottage, we carried it into the middle of a neighbouring wood, where we left it, and returned with the horses to the cottage: — our journey from thence to the castle I need not repeat."

"It was doubtless, then," said Lauretta, "one of the banditti whom I saw enter a door in the hall of the castle, and whose appearance so much alarmed me, from my conjecturing him to have been Theodore?"

"It was," replied the count; "he knew not that we were returned, and having unguardedly entered the hall, made a precipitate retreat on seeing us; for we had determined, if possible, not to let you suppose the castle inhabited, that in case of your escaping from us, or hereafter, by any means,

mixing again with the world, you might have no clue for ſuſpecting thoſe on whom your anger would have fallen to be concealed in a meſt of deſerted ruins."

"Who were thoſe perſons that approached my priſon door on the ſecond night of my confinement?" aſked Lauretta.

"Some of the banditti," anſwered count Byroff, "who having been out for nearly three days on an expedition of plunder, knew not where you were lodged, and were proceeding to hide what they had acquired in a ſecret cloſet in the apartment where you were confined, but were immediately recalled by Kroonzer."

Thus was the perplexing myſtery of Theodore's villany, and Lauretta's fears, ex-

plained away. Lauretta heard it all with wonder and ſecret ſatisfaction at the evils ſhe had eſcaped. Count Byroff pauſed in ſilence, while his daughter offered up a ſhort but heart dictated thankſgiving to the power who had given her fortitude to bear up under her ſufferings, and rewarded her confidence in him by his benign interpoſition: he then proceeded to inform her, how he had diſcovered her to be his child.

"You muſt recollect, that on your recovering from the ſwoon into which you fell in the hall of the caſtle, and finding yourſelf on the bed in the priſon, you ſupplicated my protection: it was at that moment that your voice and features ſtruck me, as bearing a ſtrong reſemblance to thoſe of your deceaſed mother, when, on the laſt night I ever beheld her, ſhe upbraided me with be-

ing the ſuppoſed murderer of count Frederic Cohenburg; but not knowing that ſhe had ever borne a child, I could only wonder at ſo ſtrong a reſemblance between two perſons whom I could not for an inſtant ſuppoſe to be connected by the moſt diſtant ties of blood, and I endeavoured to forget it.

"Kroonzer took upon himſelf the office of attending you; I wiſhed it had been aſſigned to me; but as I could give no reaſon that would have appeared ſatisfactory to the banditti for aſking to ſhare it with him, I forebore to expreſs my thoughts.

"On the morning of your eſcape from the caſtle, through the chaſm in the wall of your priſon made by the lightning, I was the firſt who diſcovered that you were gone."

Lauretta here interrupted her father, to remark to Alphonſus her providential eſcape with life in falling from ſo great a height; but count Byroff, ſmiling at the miraculous deliverance which ſhe imagined ſhe had experienced, explained to her, "that at that end of the caſtle which was inhabited by the banditti, ſtood ſeven towers, which roſe gradually above each other, and that ſhe had been confined in the loweſt of theſe, the floor of which was not above three feet raiſed from the ground.

"None of the banditti in the retired parts of the building heard the falling of the wall: the one who had the watch in the hall of the caſtle heard the rumbling of falling ſtones, but it was ſo cuſtomary a ſound amongſt thoſe decayed walls, which continually were

crumbling on every ſlight ſhock of the weather, that he did not attend to it.

"Morning was far advanced, when paſſing by the turret in a ſhort ramble I was taking for the benefit of the air, I perceived what had occurred; and entering to look whether you were ſtill there, though I was well convinced I could not expect to find you, the croſs which is now on your neck, and which from the figures carved upon it, I inſtantly recollected to be that I had given your mother, caught my eye, and ſo forcibly did this circumſtance ſtrengthen my belief, that I had not been deceived in imagining that I had diſcovered in you a likeneſs to my loſt Lauretta, that I no longer heſitated to pronounce you her daughter, and count Frederic Cohenburg your father.

"Convinced as I now was that you was the offspring of my loft wife, and conſcious that ſhe could not have been a ſufficient time from me to have borne a ſon of Theodore's age, even if his name, and Kroonzer's knowledge of his family, had not baffled the ſuppoſition, I immediately again began to doubt the veracity of the tale Theodore had related concerning you, but reſolved to conceal my thoughts till Theodore's future conduct ſhould elucidate the truth of this myſtery; I accordingly concealed the croſs in my boſom, and proceeded to inform Kroonzer of your eſcape.

"Kroonzer heard my intelligence with ſorrow, and alarm for the community, upon whom his temerity in introducing Theodore to a knowledge of their haunt, might bring the worſt of conſequences, provided you

were not regained, and Theodore took meaſures of vengeance againſt Kroonzer for his negligence, as he might deem it, in ſuffering you to eſcape.

"Horſemen were immediately ſent out in purſuit of you, but no ſucceſs attended their endeavours: the following evening Theodore arrived; diſappointment rendered him almoſt frantic, and he himſelf went in ſearch of you, ſtill ſolemnly vowing you were his ſiſter.

"Thus paſſed on ſeveral days, the banditti continually going out by turns in purſuit of you, and again returning unſucceſsful to receive freſh orders from Kroonzer or Theodore, one of whom remained conſtantly at the caſtle.

"At length one of the banditti, who had been out diſguiſed, brought intelligence, that a peaſant whom he had queſtioned, had told him, that on the very day you had eſcaped from the caſtle he had ſeen the old hermit, who lived on the ſkirts of the foreſt, leading a female to his cell.

"Theodore had before this commanded the moſt ſecure place about the caſtle to be prepared for your reception, in caſe you ſhould be retaken by him; and Kroonzer had prepared what was by the banditti called the cavern, and to which there was a communication from an apartment in the caſtle; accordingly having learned that it was in readineſs to receive you, he took one of the banditti, and as all the horſes were out with others of the fraternity on an expedition of plunder, ſet out on foot towards the hermitage.

"I reſolved at once, if practicable, to eaſe my doubts, by informing myſelf whether you had any knowledge of my deceaſed wife; I accordingly followed them, and having ſtationed myſelf amidſt ſome trees, cloſe by which I knew they muſt paſs in their return to the caſtle, provided they found you in the hermitage, I reſolved at all riſques to pronounce the name of my wife, ſuppoſing that if you had any knowledge of her, you muſt of courſe be acquainted with her name, and would on thus unexpectedly hearing it, utter ſome exclamation, from which I might gather what I ſo earneſtly wiſhed to learn; determining, if you were, the child of my Lauretta, to befriend you for the ſake of the love I had once borne her.

"Your anſwer thrilled my heart; it recalled to me more forcibly than before the recollection of her I had loſt. Whilſt

Theodore was queſtioning you, I gained a ſtand oppoſite to the ſpot whence I had ſpoken to you, and when he ruſhed to the place from which the ſound of my voice had proceeded, I reſcued you from his accomplice, and then conducted you to the cavern, which, as having been the place mentioned by Theodore himſelf, I thought leaſt likely for him to ſuppoſe to be your preſent place of concealment, as he would imagine you taken from him almoſt by ſupernatural means.

" Without any ſuſpicion of my having been abſent, I arrived at the caſtle ſome time before Theodore, who had been delayed by the aſſiſtance he had been obliged to give to his companion before he could reſtore him to his ſenſes: I grieved that I had ſo hardly uſed one who had never injured, or

even offended me; but it was my only method of refcuing you, undifcovered; and the anxiety of the moment would, I fear, had neceffity required it, have tempted me to have done more; I thank heaven that it did not.

"The dagger which you doubtlefs beheld on the table, I left you as a fafeguard againft the violence of Theodore, fhould he by any means have difcovered your retreat, and have affailed your perfon.

"I had the watch that night; trembling I flew to you, and I returned hardly able to contain my joy, that I had preferved, unhoped for, unexpected, my own daughter!

"Again Theodore and the banditti fcour

ed the country in ſearch of you, and horrid was the vengeance Theodore denounced againſt your protectors.

" I ventured no more to viſit you till I again held the watch, againſt which night I had prepared for our eſcape, which the eye of providence, regardful of ſuffering innocence, proſpered with its bleſſing.

" I durſt not impart to the banditti the diſcovery I had made, leſt they ſhould refuſe their conſent to my leaving them; and the alarm I yeſterday teſtified during our day's journey, proceeded from my fear of their overtaking me, and ſeparating me for ever from you; as Kroonzer yeſterday morning, when he departed after the death of Theodore, refuſing to hear me, bad me beware the vengeance due to a traitor. But," con-

tinued the count, "we will ſeek ſome retired ſpot where the ſecrecy to which my own ſafety at preſent enjoins me, will, I truſt, be my ſafeguard againſt the threatened danger."

Here ended the eventful hiſtory of count Byroff, who, with the tear of parental affection ſtarting in his eye, declared his ſufferings overpaid by their having led him at laſt to find an angel he knew not to have been created; to whom he was bound by the moſt tender ties of nature, and in whoſe ſmiles and endearments he might forget to reflect on paſt calamities.

CHAP. XXI.

——— Let me be your servant:
* * * * * * *
——— I will follow thee,
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

DURING the day our travellers continued to advance on their journey, and when towards evening they again stopped for the night, Alphonsus confessed himself so ill, as to be immediately obliged to retire to bed.

The exertions of body together with the coldness of the air on the night of his leaving Smaldart castle, in conjunction with the precipitate and violent changes from grief to joy which his mind had been lately un-

dergoing, added to his endeavours for the laſt day and night of concealing that he was otherwiſe than well, in order to expedite their journey, and the ſafety of his Lauretta's father, had reduced him to a ſtate of great danger; his fever was returning with increaſed violence, and with leſs ſtrength on his part to combat againſt its attacks.

Such medical aſſiſtance as the village afforded, count Byroff made it his immediate buſineſs to procure: Lauretta and her father watched over him during the night, and the morning brought with it increaſed ſymptoms of danger.

Till the fifth day the violence of his fever had abated only for ſhort intervals, and the phyſician had given but ſlender hopes of his recovery: he now pronounced his patient

free from danger, at the same time warning the count and Lauretta, against any indulgence which might endanger a relapse.

Lauretta had hitherto been the constant nurse of her husband, insomuch that count Ryroff, moved by her entreaties to suffer her to remain with him she most loved, had, with no little alarm for her own safety, now seen her pass five nights without sleep, and an equal number of day, without having retired above two hours together from her husband's chamber, which she had always passed rather in prayers for his amendment, than in attempts to enjoy that repose of which she stood so much in need for the preservation of her own health. On the pleasing change however in the fate of Alphonsus, he had rather commanded than prevailed with her to retire regularly for the

night, having promised to be kind if the maid of Alphonsus during her slumbers; and if any material change took place in him, to bring her immediate intelligence of it.

Lauretta had not been long retired, when Alphonsus requiring some drink which was preparing by the hostel, the count went down to fetch it: as he was descending the stairs, he heard a confused noise of talking and laughing, which ceasing at momentary intervals, rendered audible the voice of a person whose lamentations seemed to produce the laughter of the hearers, and the words, "*que le diable m'emporte*, if I would not give all I am worth to be dead," followed by an ill restrained cry of the speaker, and a laugh, exaggerated beyond their feelings, on the part of the audience, brought

him to the door of the kitchen. His attention, excited by what he had heard, was converted into no less aſtonishment, when, on his entering, a man, whoſe features the dim lamp hanging over the chimney had not at firſt ſuffered him to ſee diſtinctly, riſing from his ſeat, and dropping from his hand a pot of wine, which he was juſt lifting to his mouth, ran up to him, and falling on his knees before him, claſped his arms round him, and exclaimed, "*O, my maſter! my maſter!*" he recogniſed the perſon of Jacques Perlet.—"He is crazy, he is mad," called out two or three of the by-ſtanders, and again a loud laugh burſt from every mouth.

Joy for ſome moments ſuſpended the utterance of Jacques, and ſurpriſe that of the count; which ſilence the hoſt miſconſtruing on the part of the count, advanced to rid

him of his troublesome detainer, and for that purpose, seized with both his hands Jacques's left arm; this rough handling soft recalled Jacques to his recollection, and immediately springing on his feet, he levelled a blow at the host for attempting to tear him from the count, which, had not the count arrested his arm, and thus prevented its full execution, might have proved of fatal consequences to the unwarranted interferer.

Those who laugh irrationally at trifles, laugh equally whoever is the cause; thus the whole merriment of the kitchen was now turned against the precipitately retreating landlord; but as ridicule has often produced valour in a breast which nature never implanted in it, the landlord, with a countenance which seemed in return for this raillery to wish every one present in his situa-

tion, with exactly his feelings (by no means a ſlender puniſhment), was advancing to the combat, when the count ſtepping between the combatants, explained in as few words as he could convey his meaning in, that the offender was a perſon in whom he felt intereſt, and that he wiſhed the diſpute to ceaſe.

A ſmaller plea would have quieted the fury of the hoſt; and all Jacques wiſhed for, was a moment for teſtifying the joy and triumph he felt at again finding the count, which he did by a loud huzza, and exclaiming "that the count was the only good man ever created, except his own father, who was dead."

The confuſion of fiſts being ended, the confuſion of tongues enſued: Jacques ſtood on one ſide of the count, exclaiming inco-

herently, "Ah, *monſieur*, how could you run away and not take me with you? I am ſure I would have been faithful to you: you know I would.—I would not have ſtaid there without you for all the world; it was worſe than the *maudite Baſtile*:—well, *Dieu merci*, I have found you now, and if ever I leave you again, I wiſh my uncle and Kroonzer may both catch me the next minute."—On the other ſide ſtood the hoſt, who, regardleſs of Jacques's ejaculation, contended to relate, that Jacques had arrived there on foot about two hours before, that he had inquired for a perſon, by whom the hoſt now found him to have meant the count, whoſe dreſs he could not deſcribe, and with whom he had ſometimes ſaid he expected to find a lady: ſometimes a lady and a young man, and ſometimes that he was alone; in ſhort, that he had talked ſo inconſiſtently, and ſo much in

French, that they had not underſtood above half what he ſaid, only that he had often mentioned the Baſtile; that they at laſt conjectured him to be mad, and when the count entered, he confeſſed they had been amuſing themſelves at his expenſe, till he had wept for vexation; added to this, the hoſteſs, whoſe voice was none of the ſofteſt, was continually interlarding her huſband's ſtory with her own emendations and additions, and no one elſe in the kitchen deſiſted from giving their own opinion, whether it was attended to or not.

The count ſeized the firſt moment of ſilence, which many attempts to articulate at length gained him from that part of his audience by which he wiſhed to be heard, to announce to the hoſt and hoſteſs that Jacques was a perſon for whom he entertained a

warm friendſhip, and to deſire that he might be accommodated to his eaſe, making himſelf anſwerable for the charge: he then turned to Jacques, and having eaſily convinced him that he was under the neceſſity of leaving him to watch over a ſick friend, and with a caution to be careful what he ſaid, and promiſing to ſee him early in the morning, he returned to the chamber of Alphonſus with the drink he had left it to procure.

Count Bertoff was far from being diſpleaſed at ſo unexpectedly again meeting with Jacques Perlet; he knew him to be faithfully attached to him, and promiſed himſelf that he would be a uſeful companion on their intended journey: that Jacques had contrived to eſcape from the banditti, after having effected it from the Baſtile, could not much excite his wonder; but what chan-

had fortunately conducted him to the ſpot where he now was, his curioſity was raiſed to learn.

At an early hour Lauretta returned to the chamber of her huſband; ſhe found him fallen into a ſoft ſlumber: the count ſtole ſilently out of the room, and left his daughter to the willing taſk of watching over her Alphonſus.

Early as the hour was, Jacques was riſen, and the count deſcending, found him waiting his arrival, ſeated on a bench without the door of the little inn, where he was practiſing his trade on his own ſhoes, which were a good deal the worſe for the journey they had performed.

On ſeeing the count, he ſprang from his

ſeat, and ſhaking him by the hand with both his, reiterated his joy at their fortunate meeting: the count in return acknowledged the pleaſure it gave him, and having told Jacques to reſume his ſeat, and placed himſelf by his ſide, he began to inquire what accident had brought him to that ſpot.

"No accident at all, *monſieur*," replied Jacques, "but chance; as ſoon as I had got away from that old caſtle full of robbers, I reſolved to walk all over the empire, and aſk every body I met after you, till I found you; and you ſee, *monſieur*, what good fortune I have had, *graces à Dieu*; and I hope you wo'n't ſend me away from you now, *monſieur*."

The count immediately eaſed his doubts on this head, and then proceeded to inform

him of the occaſion of his having left the banditti, and alſo gave him the outlines of ſuch occurrences as had befallen him ſince their laſt meeting.

"Well, *monſieur*, and how do you think I got away from them?" cried Jacques, in return to the count's narrative.

"I know you have a ready invention," returned count Byroff, "but cannot poſſibly preſume to gueſs in what manner you exerciſed it in effecting your eſcape."

"Then I'll tell you, *monſieur*:—when Kroonaer came back at night, and told us of Theodore's death, and that the lady was your daughter, ſome ſaid one thing of you, and ſome another; however they all agreed that it was natural enough for you to go

with your child, and that they believed you were too much a man of honour to betray them, after they had been ſo kind to you; ſo they reſolved not to ſeek after you, or to hurt you, if you again fell into their hands. Well, *monſieur*, when I heard you were gone, I had a ſtrange inclination to be gone too; but I durſt not aſk, for I thought perhaps they might not put ſo much truſt in me as a man of honour, as they did in you, and would keep ſuch a tight watch over me, that I might never get away from them at all; ſo I only pretended to cry, and be very unhappy, becauſe I might never ſee you again; and I declared, that if you did not come back next day, I would kill myſelf: they only laughed at me, but, however, I knew what I was doing, and did not mind them a ſtraw; next day I was quite melancholy, and at night they aſked me, whether

I would keep my word; I did not answer them, but went and threw myself on my bed, dress as I was: when they were all asleep, I got up, and running past the man who had the watch in the hall, I made for the muddy pond on the west side of the castle, and having thrown in a great stone, a hat, and handkerchief, I climbed up, like a cat, into the top of the old willow that stands on its margin; presently several of the banditti came and dragged for me in the pond; the hat which they saw left them no room to doubt that I had thrown myself in, and not finding my body after some time searching, they concluded me sunk into the mud and smothered, and away they went neither pleased nor sorry at what had happened: when they were gone I came down from the tree, and ever since, *mesire*, I

have been wandering about, I hardly know where."

The phyſician arriving to attend his patient put an end to their converſation, as count Byroff roſe to accompany him to the chamber of Alphonſus.

In the courſe of the day Jacques was introduced to the knowledge of Alphonſus and Lauretta, the former of whom received him as graciouſly as his ſituation would permit; the latter, in a tranſport of gratitude, as the ſole means of her having ever known a father.

Alphonſus continued rapidly to regain his health and ſtrength, and at the expiration of ten other days the phyſician pronounced him

able to recommence his journey; our travellers accordingly, with the addition of Jacques to their former party, again set forward on their route, and no occurrence worthy of notice happened till their arrival at a solitary inn, which was situated in the road between Cohenburg castle, and the mansion of count Frederic, and about a league distant from each.

CHAP. XXII.

How many things are there that the fancy makes terrible by night, which the day turns into ridicule!

SENECA'S MORALS.

FORTUNATELY for Alphonſus, who wiſhed not to be known, the little inn had changed its inhabitants ſince he had laſt viſited it; thus no ſuſpicion of their being any other than common travellers was entertained by the landlord when they entered his dwelling.

Shortly after their arrival Alphonſus took occaſion to lead to the ſubject on which his thoughts were unremittingly bent.

"That's a fine caſtle that ſtands about a league from hence," ſaid he, addreſſing his hoſt.

"Yes, ſir," was the anſwer.

"Who inhabits it?"

"Nobody."

"To whom does it belong?"

"To the Cohenburg family."

"And why do they not reſide in it?"

"Ah, ſir! they are all dead but one poor gentleman, the brother of him that uſed to live there, and he can no where find reſt for his guilty mind: folks ſay he is gone into a

monastery to repent of his sins, and make his peace with heaven."

"Of what crime is he accused?"

"Why, sir, I have not lived here long, but as I have heard people say, count Frederic, the youngest brother, he that I now speak of, and who used to live in a handsome mansion about a league from hence to the left, and which is now inhabited by one count Radvelt, was so jealous of his brother's castle and riches, that he had him murdered by assassins in the Wolf's Wood, in his return home to his castle, from Vienna; and then killed his brother's wife and son with his own hand. The matter was pretty well hushed up at first; it was given out that the countess had died of grief for the loss of her husband, and that her son had killed himself in

a fit of madneſs: nobody much believed it, but as nobody had any proofs to the contrary, nothing durſt be ſaid; but the villain ſoon betrayed himſelf, for he ſtaid at the caſtle but two or three days, and then went no one knows whither."

"And did he leave nobody in the caſtle?"

"No, ſir, nobody; people do tell ſtrange ſtories that it is haunted, and that he was frightened away by the ghoſt of the murdered count; and ſome ſay, that a bell is tolled by it every night at midnight."

"I have a ſtrange curioſity to viſit this caſtle."

"You had better not, ſir."

"Why ſo, friend?"

"Why, ſir, people think that the reaſon of the ghoſt's ringing the bell is, that it is ſhut up by prieſtcraft within the walls of the caſtle, and prevented from coming out; and that it tolls the bell to call ſomebody in, that it may reveal the murder of its body to them, and frighten them into promiſing to revenge its death. Nobody goes near the caſtle on that account."

Alphonſus pretended to ſmile at the tale related by his hoſt, but it had an effect on his feelings which he could ill conceal: all his efforts to coerce the wiſh of immediately gratifying his curioſity he found to be in vain, and he declared to the count and Lauretta, that he felt an impulſe he could not

refift, to certify himfelf that night as to the tolling of the bell: in vain did they remonftrate, and endeavour to prevail with him not to leave the inn until the morning; but there was a refolute and anxious wildnefs in his countenance to follow the impulfe he had defcribed, which feemed to bid defiance to every objection.

The tears however of Lauretta, whofe alarm was raifed, fhe could hardly expreſs on what account, to a pitch of agony, at the idea of Alphonfo that night approaching the caſtle, brought him to conſent to defer his viſit to the following day, on condition that if he could gain no light on the myſtery which occupied his mind by traverſing the caſtle, and examining his father's cabinet, fhe would not object to their there taking

up their abode, which he declared would be an alleviation of his sorrows and perplexities.

After a sleepless night, Alphonsus rose to an uneasy morn; every the most minute circumstance attendant on the mystery wherein his happiness was involved, had been turned over in his thoughts during the night; and as heretofore, instead of deriving any clue of elucidation from reflection, the mystery had only thickened upon increased conjecture.

Again he felt scruples arising in his mind against opposing the injunction laid on him by his mother: again his doubts were lulled by the secrecy he had vowed to maintain, relative to any discovery he might make in the castle, which, notwithstanding the strong

impulse he felt to visit it, reason seemed to contradict he should do; and then again he felt a momentary fear, for which he shuddered to account, that a snare might be spread for taking away his life if he returned to the castle.

Judging it however most consistent with the faith he owed himself to go alone to the castle, he avowed his intention to his Laurette, and resigning her after a fond embrace to the care of her father till his return, he departed, followed by the eyes of Laurena till the intervening branches of the trees shut him from her sight.

Alphonsus rode swiftly forward, lost in a maze of fluctuating thought; at length taking a turn of the well-known road, Colemberg castle burst full upon his sight; he be-

held it with mingled ſenſations of melancholy pleaſure, and awful apprehenſion. Croſſing the moat, he proceeded to the ſtable from whence he had taken his ſteed on the morning on which he had laſt departed from the caſtle: fond remembrance was haſty to contraſt the preſent gloom of deſertion with former ſcenes of happier aſpect; — recollection became too painful to be conſtrained, and burſt its way from his eyes in burning drops of ſorrow.

Having left his ſteed in the ſtable, he proceeded to the caſtle-gate; it was locked, and bade defiance to his repeated efforts to open it: he next attempted the poſtern-gate, it in like manner reſiſted his endeavours. He ran round the caſtle, gazing upon it in every part, and trying to recollect ſome window by which he might effect his

entrance; he would not truſt to recollection for believing them all too high, and too ſtrongly barricaded to favour his attempts, but examined every one ſeparately in the circuit of the caſtle.

Tortured by having his attempts thus baffled, he threw himſelf upon the ground in deſpair; in a few minutes, however, recollecting that inactivity could add little to forward his wiſhes, he roſe from his ſituation, reſolving to return to the inn, and aſk advice of count Byroff how to proceed in his preſent dilemma. Once again he exerted his utmoſt endeavours to open the two gates, but they proved equally vain with his former efforts; he mounted his ſteed and returned to the inn.

Alphonſus immediately related his adven-

ture, and opened a conſultation with the count, on what ſteps were the beſt to be taken by him.

"Much deliberation," the count ſaid, "ſeemed to be required on a ſubject of ſo delicate a nature: the gates of the caſtle being locked might be conſtrued into an indication either of its being inhabited, or not being inhabited. If it was inhabited, the prevalent idea of its being deſerted plainly proved it was the ſhelter of ſome perſon who wiſhed to live in obſcurity, and would, from this motive, perhaps, revenge the entrance of any one who dared to treſpaſs on his retirement."

"How can he wiſh to live unknown?" cried Alphonſus, "who every night publicly announces his dwelling by tolling the caſtle bell?"

"Have you any proof of this?" faid the count.

"The young miner, and now again our landlord, both affert that it is fo."

"But they never heard it; nor likely any one who trembles while he relates it, has any authority for it but the dream of fome old woman, who having talked all day of the occurrences at the caftle, had feen them in her fleep in aggravated colours."

"I will certify myfelf in this point," returned Alphonfo, "before I proceed to any meafures for entering the caftle; I will watch the tolling of the bell this night."

After promifing Laurella that he would ufe no means for entering the caftle that

night, she consented that he should watch on the outside, in order to learn the truth of the story which had been related of the midnight bell, provided her father accompanied him; but as Alphonsus declared that he could not leave her at the inn with satisfaction to himself, unless the count remained with her, it was at length agreed that Jacques Perlet should be the companion of Alphonsus on his nightly expedition.

As Alphonsus was well aware that his going out in the night could not fail being known by the host, and excite his curiosity, he determined to inform him, that he meant to go and listen for the tolling of the singular bell he had mentioned to be sounded every night at the castle: the host, unsuspicious that Alphonsus meant more than his words conveyed, endeavoured to dissuade him from

his purpose by all the arguments of blind superstition, and vulgar fear; and finding him resolute in his purpose, besought him to wear a little cross on his expedition, which, he said, "had belonged to his deceased wife, and which having been kissed by the pope, would secure him from the influence of the devil, and his fiends."

To avoid the imputation of obstinacy and irreligion, Alphonsus accepted the offer of the sacred cross, and placed it within his waistcoat.

At a little after ten Alphonsus and Jacques set out for the castle on foot.

Where flesh and blood were to be contended with by day-light, Jacques was no coward, but a breath of wind, or a shadow

in a dark night, were great fetters of his valour. Count Byroff knowing his diſpoſition, had not made him acquainted with any of the particulars which conſtituted Alphonſus' curioſity in regard to the bell which was ſounded at the old caſtle; and as he fortunately had not heard of any dreadful appearance which had been ſeen in the vicinity of this building, he endeavoured all the way to keep up his courage by repeating to himſelf, "that the ſound of a bell in the night could be no more than the ſound of a bell in the day."

Alphonſus, wrapt in reflection, was not much diſpoſed to converſe, and they had proceeded nearly a third of the way without ſpeaking, when Jacque ſuddenly exclaimed, "Do you hear it, *monſieur*?"

"What?" asked Alphonsus.

"The bell, *monsieur?*"

"We are yet too distant from the castle to catch the sound," returned Alphonsus.

"So I thought, *monsieur*:—that was the reason I asked."

Had Jacques spoken the truth, he would have confessed that he found it very melancholy to proceed so far in silence, and that he despaired of drawing Alphonsus into conversation by any other subject, than the one on which his thoughts were then bent; his stratagem, however, answered but little to his wishes, for Alphonsus again sunk into silent reflection.

"The moon will be up preſently, *monſieur*, it begins to grow a little light already."

Alphonſus raiſed his eyes for a moment to the atmoſphere, and then again dropped them to their former ſituation.

"I wonder how many ſtars there are, *monſieur*:—did you ever count them?"

"No."

"Nor I, *monſieur*;—I wonder whether any body ever did?"

No anſwer was returned.

"I dare ſay there are more than a thouſand in all; I am ſure I can ſee five hundred to-night, and there are often as many more on a clear night; a'n't there, *monſieur*?"

"Of what?"

"Stars, *monſieur.*"

Jacques now anxiouſly waited for a rejoinder, but his hopes were deceived. Alphonſus had ſpoken to the few words he had accidentally heard, without entering into the ſubject to which they belonged.

Now the ſilence had been once broken, its recommencement appeared more unpleaſant to Jacques, than whilſt it had remained totally uninterrupted; his tongue ached to relieve his eyes and ears, which were unremittingly looking out for ſhapeleſs monſters, and liſtening for uncouth ſounds; ſinging and whiſtling by night he had heard ridiculed as betraying fear; and he could for ſome time think on no other expedient to divert

the way; at laſt a lucky thought entered his head: "I think I'll try and count the ſtars myſelf, *monſieur*," he ſaid, and immediately began counting, *un, deux, trois*, &c. paſſing them, as he pronounced the number, on his fingers: he chuckled at this happy expedient; it exercised both his eyes and tongue, and amuſed his hearing; thus paſſed on another third of the way; Jacques never the nearer in his knowledge of the numeration of the heavenly bodies, but quite as near in reality as he wiſhed to be. At laſt wearied by his employment, and not at all ſatisfied with hearing only his own voice, he deſiſted from his calculation, and lowered his eyes to the ſpot where he ſuppoſed to find Alphonſus walking by his ſide; but he was not there; for a few moments he ſtood motionleſs, then looking round on all ſides, as far as the ſlender light of the faintly ſhining ſtars would

permit him to carry his light, and not beholding his companion, he ran ſtraight forward in the path along which he ſuppoſed Alphonſus to have proceeded, as faſt as he could move his legs, and attended by all the noiſe his overſtrained voice could make.

Alphonſus, inattentive to every object but what was paſſing in his own mind, had inſenſibly paſſed his companion, whoſe pace had been retarded by his pretended ſtudies, and had gained ſome ground upon him ere Jacques perceived his advance; now, however, rouſed from his reflections by Jacques' exclamations, he ſtopped for him, and they were quickly again united, to the no ſmall ſatisfaction of one party; when an explanation of their parting took place on both ſides, and Jacques determining not to let the con-

verſation he had now raiſed, ſtag, aſked Alphonſus "how many ghoſts he had ever ſeen?"

"Not one," replied Alphonſus.

"Then you have ſeen one leſs than me, *monſieur*; and that 's what always makes me afraid of being alone in the dark."

"Now I, on the contrary, ſhould have ſuppoſed the dark to have been very agreeable to one of your credulous diſpoſition."

"Why ſo, *monſieur*?"

"Becauſe I ſhould conceive that in it you could ſee neither objects to pleaſe nor alarm you."

"Oh dear, *monſieur*, how you talk! why ghoſts always light themſelves."

Alphonſus had not ſpirits either to rally Jacques on his falſe ideas, or to endeavour to correct them by the arguments of reaſon, and he remained ſilent.

Jacques had now a clue for converſation, and he chattered on about ſpirits, ghoſts and witches, to his own joint amuſement and terror, till a few minutes brought them within ſight of Cohenburg caſtle, and all his faculties were then abſorbed in the uſe of his eyes.

They advanced within a few yards of the building to a ſmall elevation of the turf, where Alphonſus propoſed they ſhould ſit down, and wait the expected ſound of the

bell. The moon was breaking from under a retiring cloud, and, ſhedding her partial influence on the buildings, while its ſhadow fell upon the place which Alphonſus had choſen for his watching poſt, gave a pleaſing yet melancholy aſpect to the ſcene. It produced ſenſations in the mind of Jacques which he felt at a loſs to explain, and after repeated heſitations how to expreſs himſelf, he exclaimed, "Well, if ever I am to ſee another ghoſt, I am ſure this is juſt the place I ſhould expect to meet it in!"

"Folly!" cried Alphonſus: "how ſhould you expect to ſee what never exiſted?"

"*Mon Dieu, monſieur*, how you talk! why all the prieſts in the world ſhould not make me believe, I did not ſee one that time I was going to mention to you."

"Well, well, then you did," faid Alphonfus, foftened by the fcene into reflections too dear to be eafily fhaken off, and wifhing to prevent their farther interruption by coalefcing in opinion with his companion.

"I thought you would believe me at laft, *monfieur*," faid Jacques, who flattered himfelf he had made a convert of Alphonfus: "I'll tell you the whole ftory,—may I, *monfieur?*"

"Oh yes," replied Alphonfus, thoroughly determined not to attend to it, and hoping, by this indulgence of his friend's garrulity, to free himfelf from the trouble of replying to his queftions.

Having caft his eyes around, as a kind of needful fecurity preparative to his defired

fory, and moved a few inches nearer to Alphonius, Jacques thus began: "When I was about fifteen years old, *monſieur*, my father lived in a little village about a *lieue* from Deſmartin, on the road to Paris; ours was a lonely little cottage, for it ſtood quite at the end of the village, and above a hundred paces diſtant from the next houſe; my grandmother was alive then, poor old ſoul, and ſhe was as much afraid of a ghoſt as me; ſo one winter's evening, juſt before we went to bed, there comes a rap, or indeed it was more like a ſcratch at the door. 'Come in,' ſays my father; nobody anſwered, nor the door did not open; ſo my father bid me open it, and I did, but nobody was there to be ſeen; ſo as I thought it might be ſomebody that had a mind to frighten us, and had hid themſelves behind the wood-ſtack at the corner of the houſe, I ran to look, for it was

moon-light; and there I saw a man in black, kneeling down, without a head; and when I called out for help, he got up and ran away as fast as ever he could, and when he had got a little way off, his back looked as white as snow.

"Well, *monsieur*, frightened enough I was, as you may suppose, and so was my father, for he saw it too: and a little while after my grandmother died. 'Now the murder's out,' says my father: 'that was a warning of *la bonne's* death: we shall see no more ghosts now.' 'I hope not, I am sure,' said I; but he was wrong: for about a month after, one night when the wind was high, there was such a noise in the kitchen after we were gone to bed, that it waked us all, and in a minute or two the door between my father's chamber and mine burst open, as if *la double*

his mine had kicked it; then again we heard the noife in the kitchen, and in a few minutes came fuch a crafh, as if the very roof had fplit over our heads; I covered myfelf with the bed cloaths; father faid he would go down and fee what it was, when, juft as he was getting out of bed, there was fuch a rolling on the ftairs; and then it feemed to come into the chamber under the door, and all on a fudden a long, deep, hoarfe, frightful....." At this inftant the bell in the fouth turret of the caftle tolled feveral ftrokes, which founded on the air hollow and difmal; Alphonfus ftarted from his feat, and Jacques remained fitting on the turf in a ftate of fear fcarcely a degree removed from petrifaction.

CHAP. XXIII.

O, matter and impertinency mixt!
Reason in madness!

LEAR.

COUNT Byroff and Lauretta, eager to learn the result of Alphonsus's watching, had determined not to retire to rest till his return, which they imagined could not be later than an hour after midnight: however, he arrived not with the expected hour, and to add to their consternation, two o'clock brought back Jacques alone, with a countenance distorted by fear and anxiety.

Running up to count Byroff, he exclaimed, "Oh, master, master! the devils have got him; they have shut him up in

that curſed old caſtle; I'd wager my life he never gets out again: *pour l'amour de Dieu*, let us raiſe the village here hard by, and pull down the walls."

Count Byroff could not be a moment at a loſs to underſtand to whom he referred; but Lauretta, who had fainted, demanded his care prior to his aſking an explanation of Jacques's words.

The landlord brought a glaſs of water to Lauretta. — "I told the young gentleman how it would be," he ſaid; "if he would but have taken an old man's advice, and not have gone, he had been ſafe; I ſaid there was no good in the ſpirits ringing that bell."

"I have ſeen three of them," returned Jacques, "as tall again as you or me, and

all over as black as a crow, face, hands, and all."

"The virgin bleſs us all!" ſaid the landlord, croſſing himſelf, and raiſing his eyes to heaven.

In a few minutes Lauretta revived,—ſhe flew to Jacques,—"Where is my Alphonſus?—is he in the caſtle?—anſwer me."

"Yes, locked in," replied Jacques; "but don't be afraid, *madame*: I dare ſay the ghoſts don't mean to hurt him, for they are all gone away, and left him."

"Explain your words: what do you mean to convey by this inconſiſtent jargon?—Speak plainly, tell us every thing as it happened," ſaid count Byroff.

"Why, *monsieur*, when the bell tolled—"

"Oh, then you have heard it; — aye, I knew I was right," interrupted the landlord.

"Oh yes, I heard it. *mon Dieu*, I shall never forget it. When the bell tolled, *monsieur* Alphonsus said, he was sure then there must be somebody within the castle; and so he ran away to watch whether he could see a light in any part of the other side of the castle, and ordered me to keep my eye fixed on that opposite to which I was sitting. I sat still more than half an hour, and he did not come back: sometimes I ventured to look, and sometimes I did not: at last I saw him coming towards me; pleased enough was I, and I ran to meet him; he had seen nothing, no more had I. He said it was very odd, and he would only just try whether the gates were

locked yet or not, and come back alone in the morning; and I told him I thought it would be much the beſt way. The great gate was locked: but when we came to a little gate at one end of the caſtle, it was partly open. He ſeemed very much ſurpriſed; and without ſaying any thing more to me, than bidding me wait for him where I was, and on no account to follow him, he ran in."

"In the dark?" ſaid Lauretta

"Yes, *madame*."

"He cannot be in any danger on that account," ſaid count Byroff: "he doubtleſs knows every footſtep about the caſtle."

"Angels guard him!" exclaimed Lau-

retta; the tears rolled swiftly down her cheeks.

"Go on," said the count to Jacques.

"Well, *monsieur*, I waited and waited, and he did not come back: I was frightened to stay very near the castle, so I went and sat myself down at a little distance opposite to the little gate, when presently out came the three black things I told you of, and ——"

"What things?" eagerly asked Lauretta, who had not heard Jacques mention them before.

"Why, *madame*, ghosts I am sure they were, for they stalked past where I was sitting, without speaking, and I could not hear them at a foot; and the last of them locked the

gate as he came out, for I heard the key turn in the lock."

"Did you try whether it was locked?" asked the count.

"No, *monsieur*, I durst not go near it, for fear they should appear again, and take me to task for meddling; so when I had waited a good while longer, and *monsieur* Alphonse did not come, I ran home to tell you what had happened; and a fine solitary walk I have had of it, *monsieur*; *grace à Dieu*, that I get here at all;—only feel how warm I am with running," continued he, turning to the host.

Count Byroff and Lauretta fixed their eyes on each other in silence, but both their countenances expressively asked the import

ant queſtion of what ſteps could be taken for the beſt.

They could aſk no foreign aſſiſtance without betraying the ſecret which Alphonſus ſo ſtrongly wiſhed to remain unknown, and the myſtery attendant on which he might at the very moment be ſolving.

The determination of one moment, the reflection of the next rejected. Lauretta was ſuffering on the rack of apprehenſion, and count Byroff was tortured by the agony he perceived his child enduring.

In little more than an hour, a loud knock at the door called out the landlord; Alphonſus ruſhed in, and threw himſelf upon a ſeat, regardleſs of ſurrounding objects.

Neither the congratulations of Jacques on his ſafe return, nor the careſſes of his Lauretta, could for ſome moments obtain even a look in return: a frantic wildneſs was depicted on his countenance, and his ſtretched eyes were fixed on vacancy.

Count Byroff requeſted the landlord and Jacques to retire; they reluctantly complied with his petition.

"Oh, Alphonſus!" ſaid Lauretta, throwing herſelf on his neck, "what new affliction has happened to you?—what aggravated ſorrow is it, that deprives you of the power of teaching me to ſympathiſe in your grief?—Tell me, I beſeech you! 'twere mitigation of the agony I now experience, to ſhare with you the moſt complicated miſery."

Alphonfus anfwered her not.

Sinking on her knees, fhe clafped his; — "Speak, I conjure you, if you love me: eafe thefe cruel fears: what can I do to ferve you? — Name what you wifh, and you fhall find me ready to obey you."

Springing from her fide, "Hate me," he exclaimed with increafing wildnefs, "hate me! I know you will,—you muft hate me."

"Never! witnefs heaven!—can you fuppofe fo meanly of me, that accumulated misfortune fhall win from me the regard of him I once have loved? The hard dealing of the world towards you, fhall only ftrengthen my love for you; and if you ftill account it as worthy your poffeffion as you once did, your lofs fhall be your gain."

"Oh that I were worthy of that treasure!" he cried: "but an angel's love like yours muft draw down curfes on a wretch, whofe difobedience to a mother's laft command has called her from the filent grave!—Yes, I have feen her!—feen her honoured fhade, come to upbraid me for my want of confidence in her commands; to fcorch my eyes, and fwell with tides of grief my heart-ftrings till they crack, and end the torture of this mad-kened brain!"—Again he funk into the chair.

Lauretta wept, and count Byroff fupported her in his arms.—"Oh, my forebodings heart!" fhe cried, "this danger I foreſaw."

"'Tis here," cried Alphonſes, again ſtarting up; "here, hot and rankling: a parent's curſe for diſobedience, ſhot from the

glaring eyes of death!"—He turned to Lauretta: his eye regained its wonted calmness. —"Do not you curse me too: I never disobeyed you; say, you will not."

"Have I not this instant conjured you to listen to my vows of love, of truth, of constancy?"

"But you may turn cruel."—The tears stole down his cheek. —"My mother was once kind, as you are now; and for one, one act of disobedience, though my rent heart could no longer exist in uncertainty, she has —Oh, had you seen her!" a sigh, drawn from the bottom of his heart, followed; —falling on his knees, he clasped Lauretta's hand, and pulled her down by him;—"Pray with me, pray to my mother for her forgiveness."—He clasped his hands, and [illegible]

ed to pray inwardly ſome moments, whilſt his countenance underwent various changes of frantic ſorrow and pain: at length he exclaimed, "Oh! revoke, revoke——" The remainder of the ſentence died on his tongue, and he fell to the ground.

Count Byroff immediately called in the aſſiſtance of Jacques, and Alphonſus was conveyed between them to a bed; and it was, for nearly an hour, a doubt to the count whether he lived or not: at length, when he again raiſed his eyelids, his eyes, which had before betrayed the wildeſt frenzy, beſpoke the moſt painful ſorrow: he looked anxiouſly round the apartment, and diſcovering Lauretta, he beckoned eagerly to her; ſhe flew to his ſide: he graſped her hand in his,—"Do not leave me! promiſe you will not leave me."

"Indeed I will not," ſhe anſwered.

"Why are you not in bed?" he rejoined: "I have had ſo horrid a dream!—Oh!"

Lauretta turned her face aſide to conceal her tears.

Alphonſus looked ſtedfaſtly on count Byroſſi:—"You here, my friend? and you too?" obſerving Jacques—"Did you hear me call out in my dream?"—He then ſeemed ſuddenly to obſerve that he was not undreſt, and lying only on the outſide of the bed; he looked round in ſurpriſe, and tacit inquiry of the cauſe: then, ſeeming to recollect himſelf, he ſtarted, a degree of wildneſs flaſhed in his eyes, and he exclaimed, "It was reality; it was no dream; would to God it had been!"

The night paſſed on mournfully: Alphonſus anſwered rationally, but in low and deſponding accents, to every queſtion that bordered not upon the ſubject which ſingled on his heart. Once count Byroff ventured to touch upon the tender chord; his words then became incoherent, and his geſtures indicated a heated brain.

Lauretta became more affected, and count Byroff more alarmed. Jacques wept, prayed, conſoled Lauretta, and adviſed the count by turns, not forgetting to whiſper at intervals to the landlord, "that he was ſure the black devils had done all the miſchief." The hoſt on his part entreated the count, that a friar might be ſent for, to pray by Alphonſus, from the monaſtery of the Holy Spirit, which he ſaid was not above half a league diſtant.

Alphonſus continued in the ſame ſtate; and towards noon Lauretta entreated that the landlord's advice might be put in execution. Count Byroff had not much faith in the effect of prayer on a mind diſordered by frenzy, but readily conſented to the petition of his daughter; and the landlord offered himſelf to be their meſſenger to the monaſtery: ſome travellers, however, entering at the very moment the hoſt was about to ſet out, he was obliged to delay going; but Lauretta's anxiety making every loſt moment of conſequence to the ſalvation of her huſband, a little boy from the neighbouring village, who happened by chance to be paſſing by, was prevailed on by the promiſe of a trifling reward to ſhow Jacques the road to the holy manſion.

In little more than an hour Jacques re-

turned, accompanied by a brother of the monaſtery, who, in addition to his holy office, was ſkilled in the art of phyſic.

Count Byroff met him at the door of Alphonſus's apartment, and leading him to the bed, ſolely informed him, that the ſenſes of the youth, for whom he requeſted his aſſiſtance, had been deranged by ſome recent and aggravated calamities, which his ſtate of mind had rendered it impoſſible for him to explain.

The friar requeſted him to name what he thought to be the cauſe of his malady; count Byroff declared himſelf ignorant of it.

The holy man took Alphonſus's hand in one of his, and placed the fingers of the other on his pulſe: Alphonſus raiſed his

eyes, and fixing them fedfaftly on the countenance of the friar for fome moments, he exclaimed, "Who art thou?"—Thy garb befpeaks thee a comforter:—doft thou bring me pardon?—Has fhe pronounced my forgivenefs?"

"Compofe thyfelf, my fon: confide in heaven, and hope the beft," was the anfwer.

"Shame, fhame!" returned Alphonfus: "thou art a deceiver: thy outward garb fpeaks hope to wretchednefs, and thy falfe tongue belies his expectations.—Away, away! in pity do not torture me."

Alphonfus placed his hand before his eyes, and funk on his pillow. The friar turned to count Byroff and Lauretta;—"There is fome concealed fenfe even in this

ſeeming madneſs," he ſaid; "has he been ever thus before?"

"Never," ſaid Lauretta.

"The cauſe was ſudden then?" ſaid the holy man, addreſſing Lauretta.

"And unknown to us," ſhe returned.

"I will lull awhile his imagination by a draught of a healing and compoſing nature, and truſt its powers will add much to recall his wandering ſenſes."

He then knelt, and prayed devoutly to the divine power to aſſiſt his earneſt endeavours for the reſtitution of mental and bodily health to his patient.—Lauretta joined fervently in the prayer.

The friar then departed, and Jacques accompanied him to the monastery, to bring back the medicine he had recommended for Alphonsus.

CHAP. XXIV.

——— Now o'er the one-half world
Nature ſeems dead, and wicked dreams abuſe
The curtain'd ſleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his ſentinel, the wolf,
Whoſe howl's his watch, thus with his ſtealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravithing ſtrides, towards his deſign
Moves like a ghoſt.

MACBETH.

WHEN Jacques returned, count Byroff immediately ſaw by his countenance that he was brimful of ſome intelligence which he wiſhed to communicate to him; and accordingly, a few minutes after he had left the chamber, he followed him out.

"Ah, *monſieur*," cried Jacques, on be-

holding him, "I am glad you are come down; I have got something so unaccountable to tell you, and I did not know whether I might mention it before *madame*."

"To what does it relate?" asked the count anxiously.

"Why, *monsieur*, you shall hear. When I got to the monastery, the old friar desired me to wait in the *refectoire*, in one corner of which was a door a little way open, and behind it I could hear glasses jingling, and people talking and laughing; so, when the friar was gone, I crept a little nearer to the door to listen what they were after, for my curiosity was a good deal raised, I must confess: when I first overheard them, one was telling a story about the pope, I fancy; for it was a man that they said was a good deal like an

old woman, and the cardinals wished him dead; so when it was done, says another, 'Come, father Francisco, give us a toast.' 'I will,' says he: — 'Here's the ghost at the castle, and wishing it may ring as long as we all live.' Well, neighbour, they all laughed, and I could hear them pouring out the liquor, and then they repeated what father Francisco had said, and then I could hear them set down the empty glasses. 'I wonder where the young count is,' says another, after a minute or two's silence. 'Why, as to that,' said another — and just then I heard the old man coming back with the draught, so I stepped forward to meet him, and when I had got it he let me out, and so I heard no more."

Count Byroff having told Jacques to wait within Laureta's call, walked out upon the

green before the little inn, to indulge the reflections for which the conversation Jacques had overheard, had given him a subject.

It appeared to him evident beyond a doubt that the midnight bell at the castle was tolled by the friars belonging to the monastery of the Holy Spirit, as a confirmation of the castle's being haunted, which report they had probably been the first to circulate, to promote some private interest: thus he conceived also that the black figures which Jacques had seen issuing from the postern gate of the castle, were three of the fraternity, who had been to the castle for the purpose of raising the nightly alarm by sounding the bell, and were returning to the monastery when Jacques beheld them; that they had gone into the castle at first unseen by Alphonsus and Jacques, and the open

gate by which the former had entered the caſtle had doubtleſs been left ſo by them, whilſt they were in the caſtle, unſuſpicious of any one having ventured to approach ſo near a place of ſuch general horror as that building was deſcribed to be by all that knew it. But how was he to account for Alphonſus's exceſſive alarm, which could not have been produced by the appearance of three friars, if even he had ſeen them, which circumſtances ſeemed to contradict that he had, or they him? — for his getting out of the caſtle, as Jacques had ſaid that the laſt figure had locked the gate?—and above all for Alphonſus's aſſertion that he had ſeen his mother's ſhade? — Might it not have been the work of prieſtcraft? he aſked himſelf; but his knowledge of Alphonſus's manly courage, which, though his eyes might have been a moment deceived

by any falſe appearance, would have led him to have inveſtigated the truth, ere he gave himſelf up to thoſe feelings which alone could have reduced his faculties to the ſtate he was now in, inſtantly contradicted the idea. Lengthened conjecture tended but to perplex him, and he determined, if the potion adminiſtered by father Nicholas had not the deſired effect, at all hazards to himſelf to attempt the ſolution of the myſtery which clouded the caſtle equally with the real cauſe of Alphonſus's preſent ſtate of mind, by perſonal inveſtigation.

The draught given by the friar was of a ſoporific nature, and in a ſhort time after its being ſwallowed by Alphonſus, produced the intended effect.

"Towards midnight count Byroff with

much difficulty prevailed on Lauretta, who had not tafted reft the preceding night, to retire to bed.

With the dawn Alphonfus awoke; he raifed himfelf on the bed, and drawing back the curtain, feemed to liften, — "Hark! — was it not fhe that fpoke?"

"Who, my friend?" faid count Byroff, advancing to the bed.

"My mother."

A pauſe enſued.—Count Byroff wifhed to purſue the diſcourſe, but knew not in what manner to continue it.

"Will you go with me to the caſtle?" faid Alphonſus.

"Why do you wiſh it?" — Is ſhe there?"

"Not now, I fear," replied Alphonſus, raiſing his eyes to the caſement, as indicating that day-light was beginning to appear. "It was in the dead of the night that I ſaw her; did I not tell you that ſhe had a burning lamp in her hand?"

"No."

"But ſhe was dead: her cheeks were pale and ſunk; my diſobedience called her from the grave: I would fain ſee her once more, and kneel for her forgiveneſs: and would ſhe then but calm her angry looks, I ſhould die happy."

"Did ſhe ſpeak angrily to you?"

"I know not whether she spoke at all; my eyes and heart ached so I could not bear her sight; — feel how my temples beat even now."

Count Byroff raised his hand in compliance with Alphonsus's request; he grasped it. "Do not ask me to go to the castle; indeed I will not, I shall double my crime; I must not go, I dare not see her again. If you should see her, tell her ——; but you will not see her; you have not disobeyed her; she will not frown on you; think you no more of it; I must bear with it." He hid his face on the pillow, and the count forebore to interrogate him further on a subject which he saw was beginning to overpower him.

This short conversation, which tended

not to enlighten the ſubject diſcuſſed, ſtrengthened however count Byroff's reſolution of viſiting the caſtle on the firſt opportunity offered to him, and endeavouring to gain ſome light on this ſtrange myſtery.

A few hours after ſun-riſe father Nicholas viſited his patient; he pronounced him to have been much benefited by the compoſing draught, and gave the moſt encouraging hopes of a ſpeedy amendment. Lauretta was not in the chamber when the holy man arrived, but being informed by Jacques that he was viſiting her huſband, ſhe immediately entered the apartment, and eagerly inquired of him after the health of her Alphonſus.

The name ſeemed to produce a momentary ſurpriſe in the countenance of the friar, but immediately regaining his former com-

posture, he answered to her inquiry: count Byroff alone perceived the effect which had been produced on father Nicholas, nor was he mistaken in imagining that the friar's a second time approaching the bed under pretence of feeling his patient's pulse, was an excuse for more closely investigating Alphonsus's features than he had yet done. Promising to visit his patient in the afternoon, and to bring with him such medicines as were necessary, the father left the chamber, and count Byroff accompanied him to the door of the inn, in order to prevent his holding any discourse with the landlord; and immediately on the old man's departure, he warned the host against acknowledging to any one that Alphonsus had visited the castle, being as yet uncertain whether benefit or harm to Alphonsus was to be expected from such an avowal.

Towards evening the friar returned. Alphonſus's mind was ſtill in a ſtate that baffled count Byroff's moſt ingenious attempt to draw from him the cauſe of his diſorder. The friar ſeated himſelf by the ſide of the bed; he again inquired in a more exact manner than he had before done, whether they could form no remote conjecture of the cauſe of the malady under which his patient was labouring; he received the ſame anſwers from the count and Lauretta which had before been given him. He remained for ſome moments ſilent, his countenance by no means exhibiting a ſtrong conviction of the veracity of their words. "Have you travelled far?" he then ſaid.

"Many leagues," anſwered the count.

"And is the place whither you are going far from hence?"

"As ſoon as my friend is ſufficiently recovered to proceed, he will determine our route."

"You are then on an excurſion of pleaſure!"

A ſlight inclination of the head on the part of count Byroff, was the anſwer to this demand.

Many other queſtions, anſwered with as little ſatisfaction to the friar's curioſity, were advanced by him, and he departed for the night.

Lauretta, who was not acquainted with the converſation which Jacques had overheard at the monaſtery, looked upon what the old man had ſaid to have been dictated

by a no more than common curiosity, excited by the situation of her husband; count Byroff, though he did not undeceive his daughter in this point, considered it in a very different light, and he even began to conceive that the solution of the mystery would prove count Frederic Colnenburg to have retired to the monastery of the Holy Spirit, to enjoy, unmolested, possessions criminally acquired. Still, however, as it was certain that if his conjecture was a true one, all the friars were privy to the plot, he saw no means of effecting the discovery but by ascertaining by whom the bell at the castle was nightly rung, and this he determined if possible to learn that very night.

The medicine last administered by the friar to Alphonsus, count Byroff perceived to possess the same quality, only in a less po-

tent degree, as the former one he had taken, and this leſſened his anxiety at the idea of leaving Lauretta for ſo long a ſpace of time as was neceſſary to his purpoſe: he determined, however, not to inform her of the plan in agitation, and when ſhe entreated him to retire in his turn for the night, which he well knew ſhe would do, he pretended to comply with her requeſt, on condition that Jacques might be her companion in watching over her huſband. The landlord having provided him with a lantern, and implements for ſtriking a light, reluctantly, as he trembled for the ſafety of the count, conducted him as far on his way as the intricacy of the road made it neceſſary for a ſtranger to have a guide; and then, with injunctions to ſecrecy on the part of the count, and prayers for the count's protection from evil ſpirits, on the part of the landlord, they

parted, — the hoſt returning home, and count Byroff proceeding along the road leading to the caſtle.

Count Byroff had advanced only a few yards when the diſtant ſound of the bell fell on his ear; he regretted that neceſſity had obliged him to ſet out later than he had intended, but ſtill reſolving to purſue his enterpriſe, he proceeded forward with an increaſed ſpeed.

Arrived at the caſtle, natural curioſity, which the ſhining moon favoured, induced him to eye it in every part as he walked round it, in ſearch of the poſtern-gate: for an inſtant he thought he caught the glimmering of a light from a window in the ſecond range of apartments; he ſtopped and looked, but it did not return, and he paſſed on,

believing his imagination had deceived him.

At length he arrived at the poſtern-gate; it was ſhut; he puſhed againſt it, and it yielded heavily to the preſſure of his arm; he entered a few ſteps; he looked round; all was ſilence and darkneſs.

He ſtepped back without the gate, and having lighted the wick within his lantern, which he held in ſuch a manner as to be able in an inſtant to conceal it in the ſkirts of a mantle which he wore over his ſhoulders, he again entered, and cloſed the gate after him as he had found it.

He proceeded along a vaulted paſſage, at the extremity of which a turn to the left conducted through a door into the great

hall of the caſtle. He ſtepped forward a few paces, and raiſing his lantern, the better to view ſurrounding objects, nothing met his ſight but cumbrous pillars of fluted marble, which were ranged on each ſide of the hall; and at the extremity, the dark iron-gates which ſeemed to form a blot in the azure-coloured wall. He turned himſelf round; facing the gates was a ſpacious flight of ſtairs, on each ſide of which was a high and narrow door; by one of them he had entered the hall.

He aſcended the ſtairs; to the right and left lay an extenſive gallery; he again held up his lantern, and directed his eyes firſt to the extremity of that on the right; he perceived doors on either ſide, and that it ended in a blank wall. He then turned to the left; the extent of the gallery was greater than

that on the right, and as he viewed it, a figure ſeemed to flit quickly through the ſhade at the extremity.

He advanced ſwiftly along: at the end of the gallery was a turn to the right, which led, by the deſcent of a few ſteps, into another gallery, much reſembling that he had juſt left: at the extremity of this a door, partly open, attracted his notice: hiding his lantern he looked in, and perceived that all was dark: he uncloaked his lantern, and entered a chamber richly furniſhed: there were no apparent ſigns of its having been lately inhabited, nor was there a ſecond door in it: he returned to the gallery. The ſhutting of a door at ſome diſtance from him next attracted his attention; he could not determine exactly from what part of the caſtle the ſound had proceeded, but he conjectured

it to have iſſued from the gallery on the right of the flight of ſtairs which had conducted him from the hall: he followed the ſound, and the gallery terminated, as the other had done, by a deſcent of a few ſteps into a paſſage of equal ſize.

After debating in his mind for ſome moments what plan to follow, he deſcended the ſteps: arrived at the end he found a door as on the other ſide: he uſed the ſame precaution with his lantern as he had before done, and was juſt graſping the handle of the door, with an intent to open it, when he heard a long groan, which ſeemed to be uttered by a perſon not far diſtant from him: he turned round his head; but nothing was to be ſeen: he was willing to imagine his ſenſes had been deceived, and was again applying his hand to the door, when his action was arreſted

by what ſeemed a ſtifled ſhriek in the apartment to which that door led. He liſtened, the ſame kind of ſound was twice more repeated; he was convinced that it had iſſued from behind the door, cloſe by which he now ſtood. For a few moments all was ſtill, and he was a third time on the point of entering, when ſeveral voices ſeemed to break out together into tones of ſupplication: his aſtoniſhment was now wound to a higher pitch than before: ſuddenly the voices changed their tones into the notes of a ſolemn chaunt; in this he immediately recogniſed the work of prieſts, and determining at once to unravel the myſtery, with his lantern ſtill concealed, he puſhed open the door and entered.

Nearly oppoſite to where he had entered, was a ſmall arched door-way, from which

iſſued a faint light; he proceeded a few ſteps towards it, and on looking forward, immediately found that he was now in a ſmall veſtry behind the altar of a chapel, into which the arched door before him led. He ventured cautiouſly forward to a ſpot where he could command a view of the greater part of the chapel; at a ſhort diſtance from the ſteps leading to the altar, knelt, by the ſide of a coffin, a figure of a pale and emaciated countenance, in whoſe left hand was a croſs, and in the right a knotted cord.

On the other ſide of the coffin knelt three friars, who were ſinging the chaunt which count Byroff had heard begun, whilſt ſtanding by the outer door: the chaunt being finiſhed, the friars croſſed themſelves, and began a prayer, in which they ſupplicat-

ed mercy for the guilty. Upon this the figure, whose sex the sable and loose garments it wore, tended not to declare, rose, and began to lash its shoulders with the cord, the pain occasioned by which caused it to send forth sounds of lamentation, such as the count had before heard: this done, the friars offered up another prayer, in which the penitent figure joined, and they then together left the chapel by a door opposite to the altar, taking with them a lamp which during their devotions had been placed on the coffin round which they had knelt.

All count Byroff's former plans of obstinate perseverance into the mystery in which the castle was enveloped, were put to flight by what he had seen: awe and reverence for the solemnity of the religious worship in which he had seen the friars and the suffering

perſon engaged, whoſe ſalvation their prayers ſeemed meant to effect, had forbad him to interrupt their devotions; and when they were ended he felt an inſurmountable objection to introducing himſelf to thoſe who might have a right to diſpute his unlicenſed entrance into the caſtle, and refuſe to attend to his excuſe.

Some minutes were loſt by him in reflection how to proceed, when he heard footſteps at a diſtance in the gallery; but they were no ſooner heard, than they died away, and he doubted not, from what Jacques had told him he had ſeen on the night of his waiting without the caſtle for Alphonſus, that the friars were now departing; the ſhutting of a gate, with the ſound of which the caſtle immediately after rang, confirmed him in his opinion.

He reſolved to enter the chapel, and if poſſible, diſcover whither was gone the figure whom he had ſeen; for he ſtrongly conceived, he knew not why, that it had not left the caſtle: as to who the figure was, his mind wavered between count Frederic, and the counteſs Anna; the former his own ideas taught him to believe it; but the words uttered by Alphonſus ſeemed to aſſign a degree of probability to its being the latter: arrived at the end of the chapel, he found that the door through which the perſons he had juſt beheld, had paſſed, was an iron grating; he pulled at it, but it reſiſted his efforts, being faſtened by a ſpring, which he was not acquainted how to open. As he ſtood by it, a glimmering of light, at ſome diſtance, caught his eyes; he hid his lantern; the light advanced, and ſhowed him that the iron gate led into a long and narrow paſſage; at the extremity

of which, in a few feconds, appeared, bearing a lamp, the figure he had lately beheld in the chapel: it opened a door facing him, and having entered, immediately clofed it, and all was again dark.

He again produced his lantern; but the door through which the figure had paſſed, was too far removed for him to diſtinguiſh it with the aid only of the light in his hand: he determined, however, if poſſible, to find it; and, if he could, to addreſs the perſon who had ſo ſtrongly excited his attention and ſurpriſe.

After entering many chambers and paſſages in vain, a ſuite of rooms brought him to a chamber, from a door in which, a ſmall cloſet, through which he paſſed, led him into the paſſage, at the extremity of which was

the grated door from the chapel: he moved haſtily to the other end, in ſearch of the door by which the figure had vaniſhed from his ſight: the form of the wall was a ſemicircle, conſtituting, as he concluded, part of one of the turrets, of which there were four at the angles of the caſtle; but his moſt minute inveſtigations could diſcover in it no door, or even crevice.

He placed his lantern on the ground, and for ſome time continued to paſs his hands over every part of the wall, in the hope of diſcovering ſome clue to the object of his ſearch; at length he imagined that he felt through the plaiſter a ſmall elevation, which appeared to the touch like a flat hinge; he took up his lantern in order to examine the ſpot where he felt it, when, to his great diſappointment, he perceived

that his wick was dying out in the ſocket: he now found it neceſſary to return to the gallery as quickly as poſſible, whilſt he had light to conduct him, leſt from his being delayed a longer time than he wiſhed, by ſearching his way in the dark, his abſence ſhould be learned by Lauretta, and add additional fears on his account, to her already too much afflicted mind; he accordingly precipitately retraced the path which had conducted him to this paſſage, and arrived in the gallery at the moment the laſt ſpark in his lantern became extinguiſhed.

Day was fortunately for him beginning to dawn, and he eaſily deſcended into the hall, and gained, by recollecting his way, the poſtern gate, when, what had never occurred to him till he experienced it, the gate

was locked, and thus all means of departing excluded from him.

He upbraided himself for not having foreſtalled the friars' departure, which, had he but conſidered the matter, Jacques's narrative of the occurrences of the night before the laſt had warned him to do; he returned to the hall, and attempted to open the great gates, but they baffled his endeavours; how had Alphonſus got out after the departure of the friars? was a queſtion he next aſked himſelf; but he found it not leſs a difficult matter to anſwer this demand, than at the preſent moment to effect his eſcape.

All he now felt was anxiety for what Lauretta would experience, ſhould ſhe diſcover his abſence, and learn whither he was gone.

Nearly two hours were ſpent by him in vain attempts to leave the caſtle, and unavailing lamentations; on a ſudden he imagined he heard a key turn in the lock of the poſtern gate; he ſtopped a few ſeconds to liſten; no ſound followed it; and he almoſt feared his expectations to have been falſely raiſed; he determined, however, to aſcertain the truth, and accordingly proceeded to the poſtern gate; it was partly open, his heart leaped with joy, and eagerly croſſing the threſhold, he ſet forward without ſtoping to conſider by whom, or from what cauſe, the gate had been opened.

Arrived at the inn panting for breath, count Byroff inſtantly inquired of the landlord whether Lauretta had aſked for him, and with much ſatisfaction he learned that

ſhe had not. The hoſt had, by the count's deſire, ſat up till his return, and count Byroff having, in recompence for his complacency, ſatisfied his curioſity in regard to the tolling of the wonderful bell, they both retired to their reſpective apartments.

Count Byroff threw himſelf on the bed, and immediately began to re-examine in his mind the occurrences of which he had been a witneſs in the caſtle; and ſeverely did he taſk himſelf for not having, at all hazards, aimed at a development of the myſtery which it ſeemed ſo neceſſary to the welfare of thoſe with whom he was concerned to have explained; and yet he conceived that he had but acted conſiſtently with the reſpect due to religious offices.

Unable long to bear this conteſt of opi-

nions within his own breaſt, on a matter of ſo great importance, and of ſo tender a nature, he entered the chamber of Alphonſus, who was ſtill lulled by the ſoothing influence of the draught he had taken; Lauretta refuſed to retire to bed that night; Jacques readily accepted the offer of leaving for a few hours his poſt of watching.

The count determined not to impart to Lauretta his viſit to the caſtle, as he wiſhed to make one more attempt at ſolving the enigma, now more perplexing to him than ever, and which he feared her entreaties and alarm for his ſafety, were ſhe acquainted with his intention, or even ſurmiſed it, might induce him to abandon.

It was ſome hours ere Alphonſus ſpoke, though he had been long awake: he then

called Lauretta to him and embraced her; the tears ran down his cheeks. "Is the holy friar here?" he asked.

Lauretta answered, that she every moment expected his arrival.

"Would he were come!" continued Alphonsus. "I would unburthen to him my heart: his counsel might relieve me, if his prayers and intercession cannot obtain my pardon."

"Am not I equally worthy the participation of your secret thoughts?" said Lauretta tenderly.

"Oh my Lauretta!" returned Alphonsus, "it is my love for you, that causes me to hide them from you."

"Do you then ſuppoſe that I am leſs moved to ſee you unhappy, than if you had acquainted me with all the particulars for your preſent anxiety?—Oh Alphonſus! can you believe my heart leſs feeling towards you, than yours has been to me?"

"You are too good, too kind," cried Alphonſus, "to one who, choaked by melancholy and deſpair, has never given you a chearful ſmile, in gratitude for thoſe endearments, which have been his only comfort."

"Indeed you wrong yourſelf. I have been happy, very happy — witneſs heaven, very happy," ſaid Lauretta, ſtifling her tears.

"I fear I have ſaid too much," replied Alphonſus, looking ſtedfaſtly in her face;

"I have already told you what afflicts me; have I not?"

"Forget it, I entreat you," anſwered Lauretta.

"Never! never!" he exclaimed. "My ſenſes have been lately ſo diſordered, that I ſcarcely know what has paſſed; did I tell you that I had ſeen my mother's ſhade?"

Lauretta was at a loſs how to anſwer for the beſt: ſhe looked at count Byroff for advice; ſhe ſaw he was perplexed not leſs than herſelf; the door of the chamber opened, and father Nicholas entered to their relief.

The father paſſed on to that ſide of the bed oppoſite to which Lauretta was ſtanding;

"A good and bleſſed day to thee, my ſon!" he ſaid.

Alphonſus turned towards him, and ſaid, "Wouldſt thou indeed bleſs me?"

"Thou haſt my moſt fervent prayers to heaven," returned the holy man.

"If thou haſt my welfare at heart, thou wilt be ſecret, if I confeſs to thee my ſorrows," ſaid Alphonſus, with more compoſure than he had yet ſpoken.

"Secrecy is a bond of my office; ſpeak freely, my ſon, and fear me not."

"Go to the caſtle of Cohenburg to-night; when the midnight bell has ſounded, thou

wilt find the poſtern gate open to thee: enter the chapel, and pray for me forgiveneſs for my diſobedience, of my mother's ſhade: if thou ſeeſt her not, ſhe will hear thee, for ſhe inhabits there; tell her I repent my forbidden viſit, though I have learned no ſecret by it; and if ſhe refuſe to pardon me, I will die to prove my penitence."

"Are you indeed the heir of Colenburg caſtle?" ſaid father Nicholas, ſurpriſe and pleaſure mingling in his countenance.

"Oh no! no!" replied Alphonſus, "I am only the loſt, abandoned, curſed Alphonſus."

"When did you viſit the caſtle?" aſked the friar.

"It was"—ſaid Alphonſus:—he pauſed: "It was by night; but I cannot recollect whether laſt night, or not."

"It was two nights ago," ſaid the count.

Lauretta had retired to the window; the friar went to her—"Are you the wife of this young man?"

"I am, father."

"Dry your tears, be comforted; happineſs is yet in ſtore for you."

"God grant your words be true."

"Truſt to his mercy; through me he compaſſionates your afflictions."

He again approached the bed: "I will pray for you, my son; rest assured, and place faith in my endeavours;—I shall visit you again to-day; till then peace be with you: farewell."

He departed, and his words for some time occupied, in silent reflection, those he had left.

CHAP. XXV.

There is but one, one only thing to think on,
My murder'd lord, and his dark gaping grave,
That waits unclos'd, impatient of my coming.

ROWE.

TOWARDS evening father Nicholas returned; he found Alphonsus risen: his health was materially restored; but his spirits were still depressed, and a degree of wildness was at times visible in his countenance.

"Didst thou know my mother?" said Alphonsus, first reverting to the subject on which all were thinking, but none had yet touched.

"Full well," returned the holy man. "Is it poſſible you do not recollect me?" continued he with ſome heſitation.

"No," replied Alphonſus, "no; and yet methinks that ſcar above your eye claims place in my remembrance; pardon me, that my haraſſed brain excludes all thought but on one ſubject; I pray you tell me your name."

"Father Nicholas, many years your mother's confeſſor."

"I know you now." He took his hand, preſſed it in his, then kiſſed it. "You ſaw my mother then before ſhe died?"—The friar heſitated to anſwer; Alphonſus perceived it not, and continued—"Did ſhe wiſh again to ſee her ſon?"—The friar was ſtill ſilent;

Alphonſus went on, "You doubtleſs know my ſad ſtory?"

"I do."

"Oh! why did ſhe diſcard me from her affections? wretched forlorn Alphonſus! my mother cruel! my father murdered! — Oh God! grant me to know his aſſaſſin!—Father, I have a vow in heaven of vengeance againſt his murderer, and here again I ſwear——"

The friar interrupted him, "Calm thy agitation, my ſon: thou canſt not recall him into life by ſhedding another's blood; why then ſtain thy hands in murder?"

"Thou ſay'ſt true: heaven will avenge the deed better than I can; my hate and curſes muſt fall on him.—Oh, if he muſt

have fallen, would he had fallen by any hand rather than that he did!"

Father Nicholas ſighed deeply.

"Who that knew him, could have believed that count Frederic would have murdered his brother?"

"If you believe he did, you wrong his memory."

"Is he too dead? — none left to bear a load of grief but me! — I recollect my mother told me, when ſhe ſent me from her, he was innocent; but ſhe had firſt taught me to believe him guilty: —'twas ſtrange!"

A pauſe enſued.

Suddenly recollecting himself, Alphonsus exclaimed, "If you can exculpate the innocent, you can arraign the guilty: — confess to me, I conjure you, whom I ought to hate; and guide my vengeance by your own discretion."

"Lay aside all thoughts of revenge; we are enjoined to be charitable to all; and who more strongly claims our pity, than he who suffers from the pangs of a conscience, that reproves him with the commission of murder?"

"It is a sentiment too refined to bias the heart of a son, bleeding at the recollection of a father's untimely death."

"The more severe our trials, the greater

will be the reward beſtowed on us, if amidſt their ſeverity we ſtill do not deviate from the exerciſe of chriſtian duty."

"If my mother knew the murderer!" Alphonſus exclaimed wildly, without having ſeemed to attend to father Nicholas's laſt words; and ſuddenly he interrupted himſelf.—"Did ſhe know him?" he added.

The holy man was ſilent.

"Say rather that ſhe killed him,—burſt my ſwelling heart, and end at once my agonies in death, than torture me by this myſterious heſitation."

The old man was affected to tears, by the tranſports of Alphonſus's feelings.—"Wouldſt thou not rather that thy father

lived, though thou couldſt never ſee him more, than know him dead?" he aſked.

"If he were happy, witneſs heaven, I would."

"And if thy abſence from him conſtituted but his negative comfort, and even cauſed thy ſorrow, haſt thou enough of filial piety in thee to obey him?"

"Oh yes! on any terms, 'twere happineſs to know he lived. But to what end avail theſe queſtions? I know he lives not, and yet you dazzle my imagination with ideas of what cannot be?"

"You once thought a mother had an equal claim on your obedience."

"Forbear, forbear to rack my heart, by telling me I wanted fortitude to obey her commands."

"Rouſe your ſtrength of mind to execute them now."

"What mean you?—explain yourſelf, I conjure you."

"Know then ſhe lives,—but you muſt never ſee her more."

Alphonſus had till this moment been comparatively calm:—"Lives!" he re-echoed, in the moſt piercing accents; then falling on his knees, and raiſing his hands to heaven—"Angels of mercy, I thank you!—It was then her living ſelf I ſaw; my diſobedience did not call her from the grave. The eyes

ſhe fixed upon me, were not thoſe of death. —Oh God, I thank thee!"— A flood of tears relieved his full heart, ſwelled with a multiplicity of undeſcribable ſenſations.

A general ſilence prevailed for ſome moments, when Alphonſus could again articulate, "May I not once more ſee her,—only once, to implore her forgiveneſs?" he ſaid.

"You have her pardon; reſt ſatisfied in that aſſurance," returned the friar.

"Tell me, then," cried Alphonſus, "tell me why ſhe refuſes again to behold me?— And hard, very hard as I feel the ſtruggle between duty and inclination, I will not preſs to ſee her."

"There is a juſt cauſe for her refuſal. I

have her permiſſion to reveal it to you; and much I think, when you have learnt it, you will no longer preſs your late entreaty."

"Speak it, I beſeech you."

"Have you fortitude to hear a tale of horror, which is nearly related to yourſelf?"

"Oh yes: my heart has felt too much ſubſtantial miſery, to ſink beneath recited ills."

"I need not warn a wife to ſecrecy, on a point of tender intereſt to her huſband," ſaid the friar, raiſing his eyes to Lauretta, and then paſſing them on to count Byroff.

"Nor her father," ſaid the count, "to act for the welfare of both."

He then gently inclined his head, in token of attraction, and thus began:—

"On the death of your aunt, count Frederic's wife, the kind attentions which the goodness of your mother's heart inclined her to use towards his children, raised in the breast of your deceased father a suspicion that her regards were bestowed on his offspring from the love which she bore their father.

"How this unhappy suspicion ever gained way into his thoughts, I can no otherwise account for, than that the single foible of his nature was an inclination towards distrust; and I am certain that your uncle and mother were both innocent of the false imputation which your father laid on them.

"The three first years after the loss of his

wife were ſorrowfully marked to count Frederic by the death of his children; and, unable to remain in the midſt of ſcenes which gave him ſuch ample ſcope for poignant reflection, he reſolved to travel. He viſited Venice; and here chance introduced him to a lady who ſeemed to promiſe a reparation of the loſs he had ſuſtained; but a mercenary father doomed her to the arms of a man ſhe diſliked, who carried her away from Venice; and his repeated journies and inquiries could never lead him to diſcover whither ſhe had been conveyed."

The agitation here expreſſed by the count and Lauretta, induced the friar to break off his narrative, and inquire the cauſe of their emotions: count Byroff briefly explained it, to the great ſurpriſe of the friar, who in re-

turn informed them, that, after the count's departure from Venice, a report had been circulated by Arieno's ſervants, that count Byroff, having killed the ſon of a ſenator in a duel, had fled with his wife into Spain, to which kingdom count Frederic's reſearches after his Lauretta were then confined.

This, though a new inſtance of count Arieno's villany, was but a ſlight one, and count Byroff requeſted the friar to proceed.

"Every return of your uncle into Germany refreſhed your father's fears, which his abſence had lulled: he perceived his brother to be a prey to grief, and as he always refuſed to explain what afflicted him, your father's ſuſpicion grew ſtronger on the repeated refuſals of your uncle to divulge his cauſe of ſorrow.

"The laſt time your uncle returned, was with a reſolution no longer to purſue a fruitleſs ſearch after her he loved; and he retired to his own manſion, where he determined to live a recluſe from the world, viſiting only his brother's caſtle.

"Every viſit continued to increaſe your father's ſecret ſuſpicion; and although he was always preſent when count Frederic ſaw his wife, he worked himſelf into a perſuaſion that a criminal intercourſe was actually ſubſiſting between them. At length, no longer able to bear the torture of ſuſpicion, he reſolved to clear his doubts, convinced that he could not be more miſerable than he now was, be the reſult of his ſtratagem what it might.

"He accordingly gave out that an affair

of conſequence called him to Vienna. It was a probable circumſtance, and gained belief: the day prior to his departure, he viſited his brother: he told him that he had a matter of the greateſt importance to confide to him, and in which he muſt entreat his aſſiſtance, which count Frederic readily promiſed. Your father then required of him to ſwear that he would be ſecret, before he communicated to him the matter in queſtion: to this your uncle at firſt objected, but after many entreaties on the part of your father, he gave his faith not to reveal to any one what he ſhould impart to him. Your father then told him that he ſuſpected the fidelity of his wife.— Count Frederic, as it is eaſy to ſuppoſe, ſhowed marks of no ſmall ſurpriſe at this intelligence. Your father immediately miſconſtrued his aſtoniſhment with ſecret ſatisfaction at his own ſagacity and penetration. Count

Frederic proceeded to inquire whom his brother supposed to be the paramour of your mother? 'Suffice it that I know him,' returned your father; 'what I have to require of you is, that during my absence you will endeavour to win my wife to your love, and inform me of your success on my return.'—Count Frederic remonstrated warmly against measures, from which he could not possibly conceive that any discovery or advantage could be derived; but your father was so earnest in his entreaties, that count Frederic at length yielded to make the experiment.

"On the following day, a fatal day to him, your father left his castle, and taking with him old Robert his faithful servant, they proceeded to the cottage of my sister, about five leagues north of Cohenburg castle. I was in the secret of your father's

plan, and had, at his requeſt, there provided for him a reception.

"For nearly two months, your unhappy mother was conſtrained to bear the blandiſhments and careſſes which count Frederic unwillingly tempted her with; ſhe complained in private to me, and I could only give her ſuch conſolation as I taught her to derive from the innocence of her own heart.

"Repeated letters did your uncle write to his brother, aſſuring him of the fidelity of his wife; and as a proof of her nice ſenſe of honour, added, that no male viſitor, except himſelf and me, had been admitted at the caſtle ſince his departure.

"Theſe letters your father read with

very oppoſite ſentiments to what they were meant to produce in him.

"The period now arrived which he had determined ſhould ſtamp his happineſs or miſery. Robert, as it had been preconcerted, returned to the caſtle with information of your father's having been aſſaſſinated in the Wolf's Wood in his return from Vienna; and the late conduct of your uncle repreſented him to your mother as the murderer of her huſband."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alphonſus, "I remember well the accuſation which ſhe then alleged againſt him; 'twas then I ſwore to —"

"No more of that now," interrupted the holy man. "I hear the concluſion of

thy parent's fate: — when count Frederic arrived at the caſtle, and you left him with your mother, ſhe accuſed him with the murder of his brother on the pretenſions of his late conduct to her; he denied the charge, again urged his pretended love for her, and departed.

"On the next day, as you doubtleſs recollect, he returned to the caſtle; he re-iterated his love; ſhe knelt to him, and implored him to ceaſe adding pangs to the agony he had already inflicted on her. At this inſtant, as your mother has ſince told me, you entered the apartment: — this explains to you one myſtery which you could not ſolve.

"Unknown to any one, I that night introduced your father into his own caſtle; for,

as you may well ſuppoſe, he had not believed that his brother had written to him true accounts of his wife, and had only acted this farce the more deeply to entrap her, while the cloſe of this hazardous experiment lay with himſelf.

"In the middle of that night a noiſe in your mother's chamber alarmed her, — ſhe ſhrieked; a voice which ſhe immediately concluded to be count Frederic's addreſſed her in accents of familiar love; ſhe ſprang from the bed, as the perſon advanced towards it; he held her arm; ſhe ſtretched out her other hand to a table near the bed, and graſping a dagger which ſhe had lately worn to defend herſelf from count Frederic, ſhould he have attempted force upon her perſon, and which ſhe now believed him to

be doing, she pierced him who held her to the heart.

"Till the dawn arose, she thought herself the murderer of count Frederic; but alas! she beheld her bleeding husband, killed by her own hand! Immediately the vow she had exacted from you recurred to her, and constituted no small part of her agony; for the mad state of her brain taught her to believe you would fulfil it. What followed that morning, you know better than myself."

"Oh, God!" cried Alphonsus, in accents that seemed to proceed from a frame whose every nerve was racked by agony, "'till now I never knew what misery was! Oh, ye pitying angels, bless my unhappy mo-

ther! — Forgive my erring father! — Oh, father! then faid'ſt well that I ſhould no longer preſs to diſobey my mother, when I knew the cauſe of her commands: — 'twere death to both to meet! — Oh, that vow!" Convulſed by pangs of ſorrow he ſunk upon count Byroff.

Recovering, he fixed his eyes on the friar: — "Oh, wretch! wretch! doomed to be curſed for particide or perjury!" He inarticulately whiſpered, while ſighs of agony partially choaked his utterance.

"Comfort thee, my ſon: the church is able, and, I doubt not, will be willing to abſolve thee from an oath of ſuch a ſtrange nature."

"Oh, her bloody hand! — methinks I

ſee it now! — I would have embraced her, but ſhe forbade me." He paused. "Oh, horrible! I ſwore to murder her who gave me being." He ſhuddered. "Fool that I was to ſay that miſery had ſhot at me her keeneſt ſhafts, ere I had heard this tale of woe; ſhe has but one other in her quiver that can pierce me. I will not part from thee!" he exclaimed, flying to Lauretta, and claſping her to his boſom. He then turned to the friar: — "Go on, good father: I can bear any thing now; thou ſhouldſt have hunted thus my ſenſes long ago: — go on, I pray thee."

"I will briefly relate the ſequel of my tale," returned the friar, with a look to Count Byreff, which indicated that he feared to diſobey the requeſt of Alphonſus, and yet was apprehenſive his ſenſes were again per-

plexed. "At an early hour I was ſent for by your mother: and frantic with grief ſhe confeſſed to me her involuntary crime, and its conſequences. Shortly after count Frederic arrived at the caſtle, the ſad tidings were announced to him by me: never did I behold a man ſo agoniſed; he immediately declared to your mother the cauſe of his pretended love for her, and curſed himſelf for having been the blind inſtrument of his brother's jealouſy and ſuſpicion.

"The counteſs entreated me in the moſt ſupplicating terms to hide from the world the real means of her huſband's death, and to circulate an immediate report of her death: to execute the latter, I was under the neceſſity of calling in the aſſiſtance of ſome of my brother friars,

and we contrived by a pretended funeral to accomplish her wish; after this ceremony, as you was no where to be found, and that count Frederic declared himself determined to pass his future days in seclusion from the world, at the monastery of Saint Paul, the servants were discharged, and the gates of the castle locked.

"Your mother had during this interval been secreted in the apartment to which the secret door in the south turret leads. On the first night of the evacuation of the castle I visited your mother, whom I had constantly supplied with the little provision she had required, and she then told me, that she had formed a resolution of passing the sad remainder of her days in solitude in the castle. I reprobated this idea: but she was firm in her determina-

tion, and no arguments could divert her from her purpoſe.

" An empty coffin had been brought in pomp by means of Robert's adroitneſs from the Wolf's Wood; in this we contrived to depoſit ſecretly your father's remains, and it was then placed in the vault beneath the chapel; but, by the earneſt entreaties of the counteſs, again removed into the chapel: and by it ſhe has every night ſince prayed, and inflicted on herſelf voluntary puniſhments."

" 'Twas there I ſaw her, — methought ſhe roſe from the coffin when I beheld her!" cried Alphonſus.

" But the midnight bell —" ſaid count Byroff.

"Was tolled by her," interrupted the friar, "for the double purpoſe of keeping idle viſitants from the caſtle, under the idea of its being haunted, and to call to her two holy men of our monaſtery, who, by turns, together with myſelf, viſited her every night to aſſiſt her prayers over the body of her huſband."

"But you were not with her," ſaid Alphonſus, "when I beheld her in the chapel."

"No: we had left the caſtle, but ſhe remained praying by the coffin."

"How know you this?"

"She informed me, that on the night on which I now find you entered the

caſtle, ſhe had ſeen a man advance a few paces into the chapel, who on beholding her had fled away alarmed."

"Oh! the piercing recollection of that night!" cried Alphonſus. "Oh, what did I not then feel!"

"How did you eſcape from the caſtle?" aſked father Nicholas.

"Frenzy gave me ſtrength to burſt the window at the extremity of the hall, and through it I effected my flight."

"Count Frederic," continued the friar, "immediately retired to the monaſtery of Saint Paul, and did not long ſurvive his brother. Ever ſince your father's death,

the brethren of the Holy Spirit have, by your mother's permiſſion, enjoyed the rents of the eſtate on which the caſtle ſtands, in recompenſe for their nightly viſits, and the aſſiſtance of their prayers. I often entreated her to have you ſought after, and reſtore you to your legal poſſeſſions: but a wild frenzy of alarm always forbade me to urge my petition, though ſhe unremittingly grieved at the hard lot you were innocently ſuffering.

"Yeſterday morning I viſited her alone, for the purpoſe of informing her of my ſuſpicions, drawn from the name I had heard you called by, and many words I had heard you let fall, of you, her ſon, being now in the vicinity of the caſtle?"

"Was not your visit to the castle paid between the hours of three and four?" asked count Byroff.

The holy man answered that it was, and this explained to the count the means by which the postern gate had been opened to him.

Father Nicholas continued: — "In return for the information I brought her, she only entreated that you might not see her, scarcely, I believe, crediting what I told her I surmised relative to you; for her faculties have been impaired by her distress of mind. The words you this morning addressed to me confirmed my conjecture, and I again visited her this afternoon; she heard me, contrary to my expectation, with composure; wept when she learnt

that you had beheld each other, ſtill however thankful ſhe had not known you; declared her intention of putting you in poſſeſſion of your natural rights, by immediately departing from the caſtle; and above all entreated, that when I had related to you her unhappy ſtory, you would confer on her the only proof of affection ſhe could ever deſire, or hope to receive from you, namely, your never attempting to ſee her more."

Alphonſus's ſpirits were exhauſted even to infantine weakneſs; he ſeemed no longer to attend to the words of the friar; he urged no farther inquiry into this heart-rending buſineſs; but wept, and that without intermiſſion.

The holy man adviſed that he ſhould

retire to reſt, and endeavour to compoſe his ſpirits; he retired to bed, but without giving any ſigns that he knew what he did; he ſunk on the pillow, and ſpoke no more that night.

Having addreſſed ſome words of comfort to Lauretta, who, except that ſhe reſpired, exiſted not, or at leaſt without a thought to beſtow on any other object than her Alphonſus and his ſorrows; and having told count Byroff that he was called away by an urgent concern, but would return in the morning as early as he was able, father Nicholas left the inn, beſtowing a benediction on its inhabitants.

The night paſſed on in ſorrowing ſilence, broken only by occaſional comments on what they had heard from the

friar, on the part of count Byroff and his daughter; and heart-drawn ſighs on the part of Alphonſus.

The tenth hour of the morning had ſounded ere the holy man arrived; he found Alphonſus fallen into a gentle ſlumber. Count Byroff and the friar had a copious topic for converſation; they indulged themſelves in diſcuſſing it till Lauretta came to inform them that Alphonſus was awake, and had inquired for the father.

They aſcended to his chamber.—"Father," ſaid Alphonſus, on beholding the friar, "you did not tell me whither my unhappy mother was gone."

"When I left you laſt," replied the

holy man, "ſhe was ſtill in Cohenburg caſtle; I have this night conveyed her to the convent of the Virgin Maria, ſeven leagues diſtant from hence, and whoſe votaries are not permitted, when they have once entered its walls, ever again to hold converſe with the world."

"What ſaid ſhe at parting? — nothing which you were to repeat to me from her?"

"She bade me tell you, that her bleſſing would fall a curſe upon you, — thus ſhe forbore to ſpeak it. She entreats your prayers, and that you will ſometimes view with pity her reſemblance."

The friar here put into Alphonſo's hand a ſmall portrait of his mother.

Alphonſus gazed eagerly upon it, then lifted it. "Forgive her, heaven!" he exclaimed. A ſmall ribband was faſtened to the picture; he tied it round his neck, and turned the face inward to his boſom. "Lie there in peace," he cried: "and, oh! may the ſhades of my dear father and mother hereafter unite in ſcenes of bliſs, with all the warmth and tenderneſs their images are now connected in my heart."

CHAP. XXVI.

But happy they! the happiest of their kind!
Whom gentler ſtars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
THOMSON.

In the courſe of a few days Alphonſus's health and ſpirits were ſufficiently reſtored to permit him to viſit Cohenburg caſtle; by the care of father Nicholas, the coffin which contained the remains of the late count had been replaced in the vault; but ſtill it required more fortitude than Alphonſus could at that time command, to enter, unmoved, the chapel, and the chamber in which his mother had ſo myſteriouſly addreſſed him on the morning of her ſending him away from the caſtle

As the caſtle had required but little preparation to render it fit for the reception of Alphonſus and his Lauretta, count Eyreſſ and the friar had given the neceſſary orders to that purpoſe, which had been performed by the daughter of the landlord, and her huſband, who reſided in the village.

As for Jacques, from the firſt moment of his receiving the intelligence of Alphonſus's reſtoration to his rank and poſſeſſions, he could find time for nothing but congratulations alternately beſtowed on the count, Alphonſus, and Lauretta; and when they would no longer liſten to them, he congratulated himſelf by ſinging and dancing, every ſtep he moved.

The landlord, on the firſt arrival of the

travellers at his houſe, had been an attentive and pleaſing hoſt: but no ſooner did he learn that the heir of Cohenburg caſtle was an inmate with him, than his attentions became ſo over-ſtrained, that they loſt the very effect of pleaſing, they had ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed, when nothing more than ordinary was meant to be conveyed by them: he was in a buſtle all day long, whether he had employment to occaſion his being ſo or not: and, communicative as he had before naturally been, he now ſeemed to make it a point of politeneſs, hardly to anſwer the queſtions which were aſked of him.

Viſiting frequently the neighbouring village in his twofold character of prieſt and phyſician, father Nicholas was well acquainted with its inhabitants, and rea-

dily engaged in it ſuch ſervants as were immediately neceſſary to Alphonſus's new eſtabliſhment; at the ſame time uſing his moſt ſedulous endeavours to allay that ſurpriſe which would naturally be excited, on the ſudden appearance of the heir of the caſtle.

On the day after Alphonſus became an inhabitant of the caſtle, he received the congratulations of the brothers of the Holy Spirit in perſon; how cloſely their lips and hearts were in uniſon, deprived as they now were of the rents they had been ſo long enjoying, it is not perhaps quite fair too accurately to inveſtigate, conſidering in how handſome a manner they outwardly comported themſelves. Jacques ſtood laughing unobſerved in the hall as they went out. "*Ah mes amis*," he cried,

"you drank the ghoſt's health juſt in time; *ſhait à Dieu* you may never have the opportunity again."

Father Nicholas had immediately written to the biſhop, ſtating the peculiarity of Alphonſus's unfortunate ſituation with regard to his oath, and entreating for him the utmoſt indulgence of the church; and abſolution was readily obtained for him, on the obligation of his beſtowing a ſum of money on a convent of poor nuns, and undergoing a ſlight penance.

Alphonſus had reſided nearly three months at Cohenburg caſtle, and the poignancy of reflection was beginning to be ſoftened by ſcenes of domeſtic happineſs, when Jacques one day abruptly entering the apartment, panting for breath,

and hardly able to articulate, addreſſing himſelf to count Byroff, exclaimed, "Huzza, *monſieur!* huzza! *graces à Dieu*, we have not an enemy in the world now, but my uncle Perlet, and the Baſtile."

Count Byroff eagerly inquired what occurrence had called forth ſuch extraordinary ſigns of joy; but it was ſome time before Jacques could recover breath ſufficient to anſwer: at length he ſaid, "I'll tell you, *monſieur*: Kroonzer and all the reſt of them are ſent to the gallies."

"How have you heard this?" aſked count Byroff. "Why, *monſieur*, I have juſt been as far as the little inn," (a very conſtant practice with Jacques, who had been in habits of great intimacy with the landlord ſince the time of his reſiding at his houſe)

" and whom ſhould I meet there, *monſieur*, but a man, a ſtranger; ſo the landlord aſked him what news; and ſo he told us, that a gang of robbers had been diſcovered in an old caſtle, not a day's journey from Inſpruck. You may think I knew pretty well where he meant, *monſieur*. 'How were they found out?' ſaid I; ſo he told us, that a gentleman that was travelling that way, had been attacked by them, and that his ſervants had managed to take one of the banditti priſoner, who had confeſſed all their tricks, and that the gentleman had had them all taken up, and that they had been condemned by the emperor, to be ſold for galley ſlaves, and ſent to the Turks: I wiſh, *de toute mon cœur*, they had been ſent to the Baſtile."

Count Byroff immediately took mea-

ſures for inquiring into the truth of this report; and to the exceſſive delight of Jacques, who, ſince his eſcape from the banditti, had ſtood in great fear, though he had endeavoured to hide it, of being fetched back by them and puniſhed for his deſertion,—and to the no ſmall though ſuppreſſed ſatisfaction of count Byroſſ, who, from the threatened vengeance of Kroonzer, had thought himſelf in rather an unpleaſant predicament, — the report proved to be a true one.

About this time Alphonſus employed a perſon recommended to his confidence by father Nicholas, to paſs over into Italy, and aſcertain whether count Arieno was ſtill in exiſtence; intending, if he was alive, to viſit Venice himſelf, together with his Lauretta, whom he looked upon

as entitled to become the heireſs of count Arieno's property; and that it became him on this account to make her known to her grandfather; but the meſſenger returned with information, that count Arieno having been proved to be an accomplice with another ſenator who had embezzled ſome part of the public revenue, he had died on the ſcaffold, and his entire property been confiſcated to the ſtate.

Thus the wretch whoſe life had been a diſgrace to humanity, was puniſhed by a death equally ſhocking to the feelings of civilization.

The counteſs Anna lived but a few months in the ſecluſion in which ſhe had choſen to end her days; and little doubtful of her forgiveneſs in a happier ſtate,

for the commiſſion of an involuntary crime, Alphonſus could not lament, that her ſorrows on earth were ended.

Some years after this, an accident introduced to each other's ſight Alphonſus and the baron Smaldart; time had ſoftened the reſentment the baron had, immediately on the death of the chevalier D'Aignon, borne to Alpholſus; and Alphonſus had long wiſhed a reconciliation to take place. Thus, though neither party propoſed it, both viſibly promoted it; and it was effected to their mutual ſatisfaction.

Shortly after the baron accepted an invitation given him by Alphonſus to viſit Cohenburg caſtle, and beheld a ſcene

that called forth in him the tendereſt feelings; Alphonſus and his Lauretta, living in the ſplendor of rank, yet deriving their comforts from domeſtic happineſs; count Byroff revered by his ſon and daughter; beloved and careſſed by their offspring; that offspring growing up in the ſanctioned felicity of innocence, ſweetened by the indulgence of a fond grandfather, the endearments of a doating mother, and the inſtructions of a father, competent to give them. "Learn, above all, my children," Alphonſus would often repeat to them, "to avoid ſuſpicion; for as it is the ſource of crimes, it is alſo the worſt of crimes, attaching itſelf with equal miſchief to the guilty and the innocent; it is an endleſs pang to him who harbours it; for it dies only when he dies, and then too

often leaves a curſe on thoſe that follow him; it is the influence of evil that breeds ſuſpicion, the noble ſpirit of charity that ſubdues it!"

THE END.